

Check Out Boston's Mobile Tech Scene

Kate Imbach | Jan. 11, 2010, 12:30 PM | 🔥 1,254 | 💬 5

Tags: Startups, Mobile, Gadgets, Mobile Ads

Editor's note: Kate Imbach is vice president of marketing for Skyhook Wireless, the Boston-based firm that provides wi-fi-based location services for devices like Apple's iPhone and iPod touch. She's also co-founder and co-organizer of Mobile Monday chapters in Boston, Silicon Valley, and coming soon, Brooklyn. Here, she gives an introduction to Boston's booming mobile startup industry, including her company. (One she missed: Quattro Wireless, the mobile ad firm that Apple recently acquired for \$275 million.)



Over two hundred mobile companies are headquartered in the Boston area, and more than 10 mobile startups launched here in 2009. Mostly focused on individual mobile applications, none of these new companies at first glance look like the next hundred million dollar exit. But behind these seemingly single-application organizations are businesses developing new strategies and platforms much more sophisticated than what initially meets the eye.

Applications today offer the best opportunities for breaking into the mobile marketplace. Framingham-based IDC predicts that the Apple App Store will offer over 300,000 apps by the end of 2009. The Yankee Group, headquartered in Boston, projects that by 2013 consumers will download seven billion mobile applications in a market worth \$4.2 billion. Users have already downloaded over 2 billion iPhone apps.

The long-term business plan for a new mobile startup typically involves a combination of developing a broader application platform, creating a consumer brand, selling to device makers, building a cross-platform user community, and distributing via carrier decks. Regardless of the planned long-term approach, new companies have begun to use apps as a starting point to enter the market.

Boston's 2009 mobile startups reflect this new trend. Apperian, backed by \$1.5m in funding from Common Angels, develops apps for major brands new to mobile, including American Greetings and Timberland. Apperian will continue to develop B2B and B2C apps for major brands looking to break into mobile as a marketing platform. Fluent Mobile offers a leading news iPhone app, Fluent News, which aggregates news from multiple sources based on personal preferences. This app is a first step in the development of a sophisticated content aggregation platform. FitNow created Lose It!, the top free fitness app in the App Store, and will become a community and destination for working out and weight loss on the web and mobile.

The Boston area is home to a growing cluster of development in mobile payment platforms. KangoGift sells small gifts, like a coffee or a cupcake, as text message vouchers to friends via SMS. Dinube's mobile payments platform will allow users to deposit cash into a store's database, and pay for items at the location via text messages. CheXout Systems links payments via the mobile device with physical merchants, like restaurants and travel destinations, via their mobile website.

In Cambridge, Tiverias Apps designs productivity apps for enterprise users and is seed funded by GreatPoint Ventures. Their first app is Gpush, which enables push email for Gmail and other accounts on the iPhone. Rocket Farm Studios develops iPhone applications, and created the controversial Someecards app as well as Jumbli, a Boggle-esque word game, and will continue to create apps for customers based on their own platform. AppSwell crowdsources iPhone apps from average iPhone users who submit their app ideas. AppSwell develops the most popular apps based on votes from the community, and contributors are incentivized with a \$1,000 prize and 10% revenue share on app sales. Sensobi, a TechStars company, has developed an app that makes Blackberry address books more intuitive, organizing contacts by those you frequently call and what you've talked about.



Kate Imbach is VP of Marketing of Skyhook Wireless and cofounder of Mobile Monday Boston, Silicon Valley, and Brooklyn.

Contact:

URL: <http://www.momoboston.com/>

Subscribe to her [twitter feed](#)