

OPERA WIDGETS CASE STUDY: T-MOBILE

Executive summary

Seeking to shift the mobile Internet experience from the limitations of walled-garden content to provide users with access to the full-range of Internet content, T-Mobile introduced its web'n'walk proposition. To enable this shift, T-Mobile teamed with Opera Software to put Opera browsers on a range of handsets. T-Mobile's customer-centric focus led to more extensive deployment across the handset portfolio, to more useful, advanced software, and to the development of and demand for more applications and services.

Because Opera products offer a flexible platform that evolves to encompass all of the Web's latest innovations and services, Opera was an ideal partner for T-Mobile, not only in implementing its mobile Internet vision with web'n'walk, but also in its forward-looking goals for access to content. T-Mobile was committed to delivering easier and more personal access to the Web, so that the Internet on the mobile could be part of everyday life. Widgets were the tool to make this possible. Opera Software's widget solution helped T-Mobile move one step further in providing convenient, in-demand content to its customers directly from their mobile display.

The challenge

Over time, the mobile communications marketplace has moved more and more toward mobile browsing and providing services that enable users to perform more PC-like functions from a mobile handset while on the move. This has evolved to keep up with both hardware and software technology, enabling solutions that allow for mobile access to the full Internet and all its features. In conjunction with the growth in mobile Internet usage and availability, demand has increased for more intuitive and “immediate-access” applications and services. This is even more relevant for devices with smaller screens.

Enter widgets. Essentially, widgets are user-installed-and-run pieces of embedded code that generate dynamic content within a Web page without additional compilation. For users, these tools are most often used as conveniences and enhancements to the personal Internet experience (applications for their favorite social networks, flight trackers, weather or sports, and stock tickers tailored for individual interests). For operators, widgets are a way to enhance the mobile Internet brand experience by extending availability of services across a large, open ecosystem.

As part of T-Mobile’s successful mobile Internet strategy, T-Mobile wanted to give its customers easier access to the Web content that was most important to them. To do this, T-Mobile made the implementation of widgets a key part of this strategy. T-Mobile had already built a solid partnership with Opera Software with Opera browser deployments on a portfolio of T-Mobile phones as part of the web’n’walk proposition. Opera Software’s widget solution made sense for T-Mobile in meeting the challenge of giving users greater freedom to access the Web content they most wanted with just one click from their mobile display.

“T-Mobile ushered in a new era as the first global telecommunications operator to provide its customers with a complete mobile Web experience. Together with Opera, T-Mobile launched the pan-European success story called web’n’walk, enabling people to use all their favorite Web sites on nearly any device. Today, T-Mobile takes another industry-defining step forward. In the latest release of web’n’walk, the mobile phone comes alive with widgets that deliver personalized services direct from the home screen, giving people more powerful tools to take full advantage of the mobile Web experience.” -Jon von Tetzchner, CEO, Opera Software

Brief history and background

From its incorporation in 1999, T-Mobile International, a subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom, has become one of the world’s leading mobile operators. The T-Mobile Group has increased its visibility and enhanced its market position (throughout the European and US markets in which it operates) by constantly developing new technologies and offering user-centric services.

Focusing on the user experience has helped T-Mobile grow its customer base to around 128 million (12/2008), a figure that is always increasing, while offering wireless voice, messaging and data services wherever people “live, work and play”.

T-Mobile and Opera Software partnership

In June of 2005, with its web’n’walk proposition, T-Mobile introduced full Web browsing to its customers as a part of its “Internet in your pocket” offering. Opera Software’s Web browser enabled the full Web access promised by the web’n’walk initiative. Freeing users from the limited and limiting walled-garden content that had prevailed in mobile Internet offers, web’n’walk aimed to give people unrestricted access to the full Internet and all its services when on-the-go while also growing data services into a mass market. The Opera browser solution proved to be the perfect tool for implementing the first stage of web’n’walk on the Nokia 6630, 6680 and N70 handsets, which launched in Germany and Austria in July 2005.

The T-Mobile-Opera relationship incrementally grew with web’n’walk’s expansion to the SDA II Smartphone in September 2005. This was Opera’s first commercial deployment to the Windows Mobile operating system.

The handset portfolio continued to grow as T-Mobile expanded its Web offering on high-volume feature phones in Europe, making Opera Mini available on selected handsets. A T-Mobile-branded, cus-

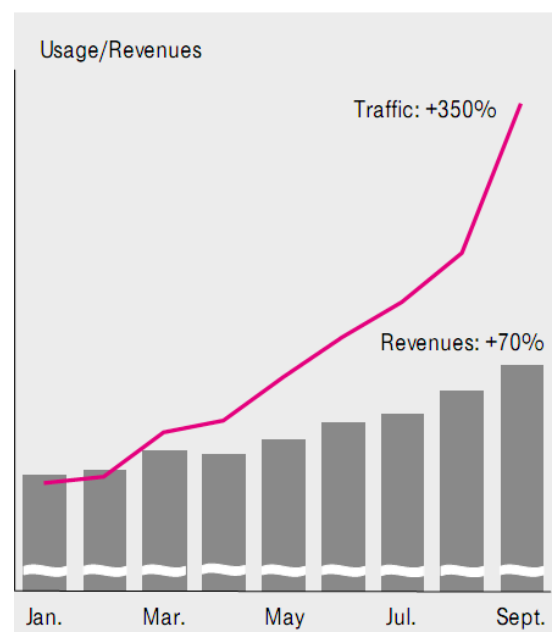


Figure 1: T-Mobile Germany: Internet usage and growth, 2006¹

¹ http://www.download-telekom.de/dt/StaticPage/49/40/061109-presentation_49404.pdf

tomized version of Opera Mini was pre-installed on four mobile phones, with several more handsets to come, eventually expanding to the majority of T-Mobile's handset portfolio. T-Mobile was, in fact, the first operator to preinstall Opera Mini to deploy across most of its handsets. Preinstallation allowed T-Mobile to broaden its Internet-capable mobile portfolio considerably on handsets that had previously been incapable of running a full Web browser. This created convenience and value for users, while allowing T-Mobile to increase ARPU from driving data. In Germany, T-Mobile showcased 350% data growth and +70% revenue growth in 2006 (figure 1), to which the Opera Mini preinstallations contributed. (Globally, T-Mobile non-SMS data revenues grew at a rate of 50%.)

Building on both the ongoing T-Mobile-Opera partnership and the desire to offer a more personal, user-driven experience, T-Mobile introduced widgets to its next-generation mobile-Web offer in September 2008, with an aim to deliver web'n'walk widgets in the active idle screen by April 2009.

Why widgets?

Widgets, as standalone mini applications, are developed largely as convenient shortcuts to useful content and information. Widgets, in addition, can gather information from several sources and present it to the user in a coherent way. For example, traffic information can be sourced from Yahoo! and maps to create a mash-up widget that offers increased usability to the user. Widgets began on desktop computers and have become highly developed user tools with "widgetized" spaces on blogs, toolbars and personalized portals. More and more, the convenience of widgets is appearing on mobile handsets and TVs and other devices where instant access to Web content on the idle screen might be seen as a compelling benefit. The principal benefit of a widget is its ability to provide immediate access to truly useful, personalized content on any device.

Mobile widgets, which can be downloaded or embedded on handsets, can be viewed as a necessity as much as a convenience; the mobile environment and user-interface space constraints can make searching through copious amounts of information on a mobile handset difficult, time consuming and not particularly user friendly. The zero-click nature of widgets on the idle screen makes widgets attractive because information is updated in real time without making the user take any action to get the update. This implementation of widgets works well with the general patterns of mobile phone usage. Mobile phones are primarily used for routine, specific tasks, such as messaging and voice connections and looking up information and basic Web access², which remains true, despite the increasing sophistication of mobile phones and growing simplicity of use. Users still demand straightforward access to information, which can easily be accomplished using widgets on an idle mobile screen.

With or without widgets, users expect an "always-on, always-aware" device³ and experience. Widget technology breathes life into the always-on, always-aware, always-connected expectation while being small, portable and simple enough to be useful and user friendly. Mobile widgets stand to become a key component of mobile Internet services where convenience and immediacy of access to specific information is valued. Widgets, along with flat-rate data tariffs, enable the mobile Web to become truly mainstream.

Consumers

For consumers, widgets offer the potential for a more personalized and convenient mobile-Web experience. Certain specific services are best delivered to customers via widget⁴ because they do not require accessing a Web browser and searching for information. A standalone widget retrieves/accesses and displays just the information needed from specific Web sites. For example, a weather widget, a sports or stock-market ticker displaying specific teams or stocks, or a more finite service, such as a pregnancy-timeline widget can all be personalized for ease of use. The bottom line is that delivering widgets that customers will actually use is equally important as the technology and brand⁵.

The entire widget concept, from the point of view of the consumer, addresses usability and convenience. To become a mass-market tool and to appeal to broader groups of users, widgets will first and foremost need to be useful applications that users demand and to which users can gain immediate access. Widgets bypass the need for accessing the Web browser, which can aid in building usership (both in terms of attracting more mobile Web users and retaining existing mobile Web users and increasing their usage)—the easier access to information available, the more users will use these widgets and adopt other widgets. One of the most compelling aspects of the growth in widgets is the zero-click, instant access they allow users to have while also allowing for complete user control in terms of the information/content s/he selects. Widget solutions allow for easy content discovery within an application store or widget repository that is filled with a rich variety of content from open-developer communities—user-friendly environments where finding the widget of choice is simple and intuitive (much

WHY OPERA WIDGETS?

For consumers, Opera Widgets:

- Allow for zero-click, instant access to pre-selected information, bypassing need for browser access
- Allow easy content discovery (within app store/repository environments)
- Provide a new way to experience the potential of the mobile Internet and interact with content
- Are easy to configure, activate and deactivate
- Are mobile, portable, viral, easy to share, fun and entertaining

² "Mobile Widgets" (white paper), p. 4, Little Spring Design, Inc., accessed 6 April 2009
³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <http://www.jacksonfish.com> (Branded Software Experiences white paper)

easier than searching on the open Web).

In addition to giving users a new way to interact with Web content, widgets are easy to access, configure, activate or deactivate, again emphasizing the level of control and choice the consumer has.

Operators

For operators, widgets offer a simple, immediate way to bring their customers even closer to the content and services they want. Aside from occupying a smaller space on already limited screens (specially designed to be visually appealing for the small screen), widgets allow operators to take advantage of the limited real estate of the mobile screen to promote and extend their own brand (and content) beyond just their Web presence.

In essence, widgets simplify some aspects of Web access by giving consumers the ability to access very specific, pre-selected information and updates directly from the idle screen of their mobile phones. The input limitations of mobile handsets that might hamper the fast and widespread growth of mobile browsing actually create a perfect environment for widgets to flourish and go mass market (a much wider audience can appreciate and understand the simplicity of using widgets to access exactly the information they way without accessing a full browser on their mobile phone).

Widgets are quick and easy applications to develop once and deploy everywhere, enabling the operator to create and offer various widgets to customers, constantly enhancing and improving the user experience. Because widgets are created using the same technologies used to create Web pages, they are relatively simple to develop. Distribution is easy (either by offering widgets for download or embedding selected widgets directly on handsets). The ease and speed with which widgets are developed and deployed provides a time-to-market advantage. Widgets can also be a market differentiator, allowing for companies to offer services and conveniences to consumers that make the company stand out from competitors.

Widgets have various uses, such as, being a virtual utility (calendar or weather forecast), being an information module or a shortcut button. Regardless of the type of widget, operators have the opportunity to develop their brand, grow revenue and build a relationship (and loyalty) with consumers as well as with their Internet partners. The first way in which this is possible is by giving consumers what they want—creating and offering widgets that are in fact useful, attractive and that will ultimately create an attachment to the service and forge a customer relationship with the brand. A consumer may demand an interactive service widget, such as widgets that enable real-time updates of eBay sales. Widgets can also enable product placement, enhancing brand visibility and driving traffic to Web sites where purchases can be made. Widgets can also enhance customer relationship building—companies can offer widgets that enable a consumer to gather needed information (e.g., parcel tracking), which leads to a stronger sense of closeness between the consumer and company and a level of personalized service that builds loyalty and a sense of receiving a valuable service in the customer.

Another valuable kind of widget is the branded widget, such as a T-Mobile Music widget or widgets from popular Internet brands such as Facebook. Branded widgets are highly identifiable, visible and can help attract users, enhancing their relationship to a specific brand. The branded widget can, for example, notify users of brand news or events while generating buzz/excitement and putting the brand front and center.

Widgets offer the “write once, run anywhere” principle to operators. Customers use all types of devices and if an operator wants to push the same service or application across all types of devices, widgets simplify this process. All proprietary systems need developers to have skills that are not interoperable. Widgets, on the other hand, use the open Web technologies with which Web developers are already familiar, because these technologies are used to build Web pages.



MDA Vario V weather widget

WHY OPERA WIDGETS?

For operators, Opera Widgets:

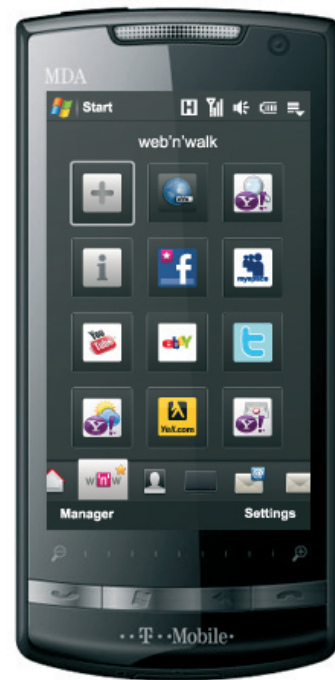
- Provide cross-platform, cross-device neutrality (Opera has no agenda; is simply the technology enabler)
- Are easy to develop and distribute
- Create an avenue for revenue growth and brand building
- Create a channel for customer relationship management and loyalty building
- Simplify aspects of Web access, given input limitations of mobile handsets, appealing to a bigger market (i.e. getting exact information needed without accessing the full browser)
- Provide a time-to-market advantage
- Are a market differentiator
- Allow for taking advantage of open APIs from Web 2.0 services from companies like Google and Yahoo!

The T-Mobile widget proposition

For T-Mobile, widgets represented a key role in its mobile Internet strategy, building on the success of getting people to browse the Internet actively on their mobile handsets. In September 2008, T-Mobile and Opera Software unveiled a partnership to develop the “Widget Internet”—the future of the Web experience.

As part of T-Mobile’s web’n’walk proposition, which had successfully made mobile browsing easier, faster and more convenient, the widget solution was launched to build on this growth. Web’n’walk widgets were designed to complement the browser-based, continually updated web’n’walk homepage and by April 2009 offered:

- Direct access to the most important and personal Internet services
- Automatic notification of new information on personal Internet sites (from active widgets)
- Creation of an open, standardized platform (via strategic partnership between T-Mobile and Opera) <http://dev.opera.com/articles/view/creating-t-mobile-widgets/>



MDA Compact V featuring web’n’walk with widgets

With the addition of widgets, web’n’walk became an even more compelling offer for users. T-Mobile, with its Opera partnership, was able to take advantage of widget customization and management available with the Opera Widgets solution, offering long-tail-based content and services to customers while opening up a number of new revenue-generating opportunities across all different media domains.

The benefits of cross-platform, cross-device Opera Widgets include:

- Support and investment in standards-based Web technologies
- Reuse of knowledge gained from Web-based development
- Reuse of code across platforms and devices
- Shorter development time
- Ease of development
- Increase in the user base for the widgets developed
- Simplification of development process



MDA Vario IV widget gallery



Samsungi900 Omnia web’n’walk with widgets

The winning formula: T-Mobile and Opera widget partnership

Clear vision, strategy and industry partnerships

Along with the Opera partnership, T-Mobile implemented its mobile Internet strategy by seeking industry partnerships that would ensure the best Internet experience for its customers. With the cooperation of partners, such as Opera, Apple, Google and Nokia, T-Mobile is constantly expanding the horizons of the mobile-Internet marketplace as a whole, aiming not just for customer satisfaction and retention but for an improvement to the overall quality of the mobile Internet industry wide.

"T-Mobile is striving towards offering its customers the best Internet experience at any time and in any place. To this end, we have introduced the iPhone into our markets in cooperation with Apple and are working on a new operating system, Android, in cooperation with Google, as a member of the Open Handset Alliance. The new web'n'walk is enabling us to push ahead with this strategy and introduce a new level of Internet quality to our other terminal devices and operating systems as well. We invite the industry to support the development and spread of this open, standards-based platform for the benefit of users and application developers." -Rainer Deutschmann, Senior Vice President, Mobile Internet, T-Mobile International AG

Net neutrality

Opera Widgets are unaffiliated with any particularly platform or content provider, making it a completely neutral technology enabler and solution, allowing T-Mobile to support open standards. Across platforms and devices, Opera Widgets can be created and deployed using the same Web technologies used to create Web pages. Widgets can then be deployed to mobile handsets, TVs and other connected devices. All of this is possible with Web technologies and Web standards, which Opera helps to create with its leadership role in the W3C.

Personalization

Widgets can be set up quickly and easily to match the personal preferences of end users. T-Mobile's commitment to giving consumers what they ask for and anticipating their needs led to taking the development of its web'n'walk proposition a step further. With widgets integrated into the web'n'walk offer, users can easily select the active widget icon from the standard display. Information from personalized sites is updated in real time. Personalization builds convenience for the user and creates loyalty to the operator, as the whole user experience is channeled through the web'n'walk service.

Accessibility and simplicity

The user experience is enhanced by the simplicity and ease of access to desired information. The widget solution enables instant access to the content users want. With just a few clicks, users are able to add their preferred widgets to their mobile phone display easily. With the integrated web'n'walk package, this is a simple and intuitive process.

Customization and choice

A customized solution fosters greater brand loyalty and ultimately gives full creative and content-related control to the operator. Opera Widgets add a layer of possibilities onto the existing customized Opera technologies offered as a part of the web'n'walk proposition. With both a widget gallery, offering an always-growing complement of widgets for popular Web sites, and options for widget creation (other users and providers can create additional widgets via an open platform that can be used on any T-Mobile handset), users gain tremendous freedom with regard to the content they can access while T-Mobile furthers its relationship with its customers and enhances its brand visibility.

For an operator, customizing is an important part of differentiating the brand and helps develop a stronger image with which customers can identify. Furthermore, control of content (and offering more avenues to accessing desired content more easily) being served to consumers allows for exploration of new revenue streams and capitalizing on the content market. The trend in the industry has been to implement branded widget/application solutions; T-Mobile has created an integrated marketplace on its web'n'walk platform, where users have a good deal of choice in terms of mobile content and Internet services.

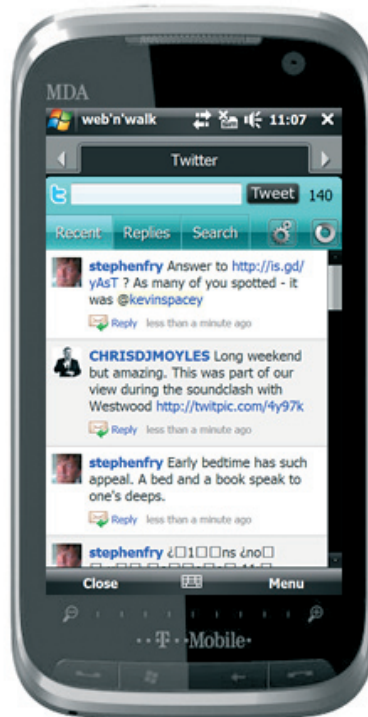
Management

A management team that offers its full support and participation in augmentations to the mobile Internet proposition is crucial. T-Mobile management was fully committed to the innovation required to meet the demands of its users.

T-Mobile: The way forward

For T-Mobile and its parent company, Deutsche Telekom, “the future has begun”. Going forward, T-Mobile will continue to look for and create practical solutions to make innovative ideas a reality. This begins with T-Mobile’s plan to evolve the web’n’walk platform to deliver new services, such as into their Connected Life and Work (CLW) proposition, which enables a seamless user interface and access to fixed and mobile services and applications across multiple devices, such as the television, PC and mobile phone.

To get a glimpse of T-Mobile’s future, have a look at www.t-mobile.net.



MDA Vario V displaying Twitter

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Oslo, Norway (Headquarters)

Opera Software ASA
Waldemar Thranes gate 98
0175 Oslo
Norway
Tel: +47 24 16 40 00
Fax: +47 24 16 40 01

Wrocław, Poland

Opera Software International
ul. Szewska 8, 3p
50-122 Wrocław
Poland

Mountain View, USA

Opera Software LLC
700 E. El Camino Real
Suite 310
Mountain View, CA 94040
USA
Tel: +1 650 276 0557
Fax: +1 650 625 8470
Email: americas@opera.com

Taipei, Taiwan

5F., No. 285, Sec. 4, Zhongxiao E. Rd.,
Dan-an District, Taipei City
106, Taiwan
R.O.C.
Tel: +886 2 6639 8388
Fax: +886 2 8772 8252

Linköping, Sweden

Opera Software
St Larsgatan 12
582 24 Linköping
Sweden
Tel: +46 13 479 11 00

Prague, Czech Republic

Opera Software International
Karlovo nám. 24
110 00 Prague 1
Czech Republic

Tokyo, Japan

Opera Software
Tokyu Ikejirihashi bldg 1F
3-8-1 Higashiyama Meguro
Tokyo 153-0043
Japan
Tel: +81 3 5768 8220
Fax: +81 3 5768 8221

Seoul, Korea

Opera Software
Suite 519, City Air Terminal
159-6 Samsung-dong, Gangnamgu
Seoul 135-728
Korea
Tel: +82 2 551 3870
Fax: +82 2 551 3871

Göteborg, Sweden

Opera Software
Kyrkogatan 4
411 15 Göteborg
Sweden

San Diego, USA

Opera Software
4241 Jutland Dr.
Suite 105
San Diego, CA 92117

Beijing, China

Opera Software
Rm. 0932/33/35, Tower C, Chaowai SOHO
#6 Chaowai Street, Changyang District
100020, Beijing
China
Tel: +86 10 5869 2668
Fax: +86 10 5869 2644

Chandigarh, India

Opera Software India Pvt. Ltd.
SCO 370, Second Floor, Sector 8
Panchkula - 134 108
Chandigarh Tricity, Haryana
India
Tel: +91 172 4652917