

THE MOBISODE :

In late January, 2005, Verizon Wireless launched the first ever “TV” show produced exclusively for view on hand-held, mobile phone devices. Named “*mobisodes*,” these self-contained, one-minute dramas were created by Fox-parent News Corp in partnership with Verizon Vcast – a union that itself signals a burgeoning recognition of mobile phone devices as the “fourth” screen (following cinema, television and personal computers) worthy of it’s own, media-specific content.

While video streaming has been available for mobile users for several years, what makes the mobisode fascinating is the creation of content specific to this device. In the interest of technology dictating narrative, mobisode producers employ specific aesthetic devices that facilitate a new reading of televisual content while acknowledging the limits of the mobile screen: for example, tight close-ups are used to better display facial emotive cues, clips are shot with digital cameras to provide a more compatible image quality and narrative flow is constrained specifically to the one-minute information transfers allocated by mobile carriers.

While this can be perceived as emblematic of content determined by technology, accompanying news articles will argue that while the currently available shows “24: Conspiracy,” “Love and Hate” and “The Sunset Hotel” were created to spur interest in their television-based forebears (particularly the first show, which undoubtedly relies heavily on the mass popularity of the show “24”), research in countries such as South Korea reveal that consumers far prefer to use their mobiles to watch shows that they already favor. Were mobiles equipped with video-stream software to become just another “screen,” this therefore renders this form of mobile phone use subservient to the consistency of quality in TV Programming (technology determined by content). In other words, a fun new media-viewing device does not make an existing television program “better.”

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Telephony

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HEADLINE: VERIZON TAKES MOBILE TV PRIME TIME

BYLINE: by Kevin Fitchard

BODY:

Verizon Wireless this week is launching the first mobile TV show developed exclusively for the U.S. market. The one-minute "**mobisode**" was written, shot and produced for distribution via the carrier's 3G network and handsets. It also represents the first time a TV studio, Fox network owner News Corp., has created new video content specifically for a mobile device.

Verizon and News Corp. claim the **mobisode** is a milestone in mobile content, which may not be over-stating it. *It shows that major entertainment companies are willing to devote resources, money and talent toward creating something solely for the mobile format.* The studios are willing to bet that the tiny screen of a handset can be an entertainment medium in its own right - a so-called "*fourth screen*" on par with the movie, TV and PC screens - not just an adjunct to wireless.

"We certainly believe that wireless is becoming a new medium for entertainment," said Paul Palmieri, executive director of business development for Verizon Wireless. "We're targeting mainstream media and bringing it directly to subscribers. These **mobisodes** are a signal of what's to come."

But the industry is also taking a risk. Video streaming is barely in its nascent phases. The repurposed sports, news and entertainment video streams currently available have limited audiences. The format of the short video clips optimized for a tiny screen may seem a bit arcane to consumers bred on living room TV. News Corp. and Verizon are gambling that they can spur the market for multimedia by creating an entirely new format of wireless entertainment. And while industry observers laud both companies for taking the plunge into these unknown waters, many of them expressed doubts as to whether the **mobisode** will be a success.

Risk or not, the potential of the handset is too great to ignore, said Lucy Hood, senior vice president of content for News Corp. She pointed out that there are 1.3 billion mobile subscribers in the world today, compared with 1.1 billion TV homes - and the growth in handset purchases is far outpacing that of TVs. "This is a growth market that we want to be a first mover in," Hood said.

News Corp. has created three **mobisodes**, spearheaded by "24:Conspiracy," a mobile spinoff of the immensely popular Fox thriller "24." The other two shows - a reality show and a drama - however, are entirely new, created independently of any News Corp programming on TV today. News Corp. isn't just producing them like a standard TV series. Directors are shooting them in digital video and using tight close-up camera angles to allow for the facial expressions of the actors to show up on a tiny handset screen. It's rare to see more than one head in a frame at any given moment.

Most significantly though, each **mobisode** is only 1 minute in length. The format was designed not only to fit in with what Verizon and News Corp expect to be the watching patterns of mobile users but also the network's technological limits. Hood said News Corp originally planned on making 2-minute **mobisodes**, but after talks with partners Verizon and Vodafone, found that carriers are much more comfortable with delivering a 1-minute stream with consistent quality.

Verizon is promising to deliver the shows at least 15 frames per second over its EV-DO network, and while this kind of made-for-mobile content would seem to fall under the premium content category along with games, ringtones and other multimedia, Verizon is including these first three shows in its standard \$15 per month Vcast package for no additional charge.

"Clearly, when you offer something for the first time, you want to expose it to the largest audience possible," Palmieri said.

The rest of the industry is watching the launch very closely, waiting to see how the new format goes over with users, and whether the rest of the entertainment industry will follow. Phillip Alvelda, CEO of Idetic, the company behind MobiTV, said News Corp's interest alone shows that there is already serious momentum. Though MobiTV has nothing to do with Vcast's launch, he said News Corp's willingness to invest in a mobile-only format is impressive. Even if the first batch of **mobisodes** flop, the entertainment firms now seem committed.

"When we launched, you couldn't get the major studios to invest their brands or the production costs in this kind of project," Alvelda said. "Clearly, the media companies aren't going to recoup their costs immediately, but it's testimony to the fact that they think this is a market they need to invest in."

Producing a 1-minute show in digital video with unknown actors is a lot cheaper than producing an hour-long episode of "24" and paying Kiefer Sutherland's salary, but those costs are still significant, compared with what News Corp. can expect to generate from the initial handful of **mobisode** subscribers. In a repurposed model, content that normally airs on TV is merely edited and modified for the mobile screen. Tighter camera shots and larger graphic icons are used, but for the most part, it's what you see on TV. That TV revenue stream is where the studios make their money. **Mobisodes'** premise, however, completely breaks with that model since there's no traditional TV broadcast to fall back on.

In addition, the **mobisode** pre-supposes that people don't want to watch the same old TV content on their handsets - that they want something new adopted specifically for mobile lifestyles. But according to research firm A.T. Kearney, watching TV on their phones is exactly what users want to do. A.T. Kearney polled consumers on three continents and upon being presented with content options ranging from unique video composed specifically for handsets to repurposed content to basic TV streaming, consumers overwhelmingly reached for the familiar, choosing the brands and programming they see on their TV and theater screens, said Andrew Cole, head of A.T. Kearney's telecom and media practice.

"We don't believe that wireless is a brand new medium for entertainment," Cole said. "The mass media content that you and I love is what people want to see on their phones. They essentially want to see their cable TV channels on their handsets. They want the familiar. They want CNN. They want ESPN."

Cole said SK Telecom and its content partners in South Korea went to enormous expense in creating exclusive content for consumer services, releasing whole albums of digital music over their networks before they were available in retail stores on CD and developing "made for mobile" video content, only to discover its subscribers were tuning into the mobile versions of the channels found on Korean TV waves. While those channels weren't the exact same as their TV broadcasts - programming was edited, the picture adopted for screen size and the transmissions often on-demand rather than live - for the most part, those channels resembled traditional TV programming, Cole said. He added that there is a role for the **mobisode** and other original content in the wireless multimedia deck, but it won't displace the wide appeal of repurposed content.

"24:Conspiracy" might be the hybrid. It has original content, but it is also closely tied with its TV forebear, giving the subscriber something familiar and benefiting from the TV show's promotion, said Linda Barrabee, senior wireless analyst for the Yankee Group. While the power of the brand can't be underestimated, using that brand can also backfire, she said.

"You have a certain amount of expectations around a brand," Barrabee said. "You don't want something to be completely different from a brand, otherwise users will be disappointed. At the same time, you want to have some differentiation, otherwise you're not supplying any original content. Content providers need to find that medium between the two."

THE VERIZON WIRELESS SPRING LINEUP

News Corp. will be launching three **mobisodes** at Vcast's Feb. 1 launch. New episodes will air once a week, remaining available for streamed download for the duration of the week.

24:Conspiracy - A spinoff of the TV show "24," the **mobisode** draws on plots from the original but with a new cast and script.

Love & Hate - A manipulated reality show, using actors as contestants that interact with the real world in situations defined by a loose set of parameters.

Sunset Hotel - A drama series compacted into 26 1-minute episodes.

Source: News Corp.

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February 8, 2005 Tuesday

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HEADLINE: Two New Twentieth Television Mobile Shows Premiere on V CAST From Verizon Wireless;
'The Sunset Hotel' and 'Love and Hate' **Mobisodes** Developed for Viewing on Wireless Phones

DATELINE: HOLLYWOOD, and BEDMINISTER, N.J. Feb. 8

BODY:

HOLLYWOOD, and BEDMINISTER, N.J., Feb. 8 /PRNewswire/ -- Twentieth Television and Verizon Wireless, the nation's leading wireless service provider, are bringing the drama and excitement of two **mobisodes** this week to Verizon Wireless V CAST customers -- "Love and Hate" and "The Sunset Hotel." V CAST from Verizon Wireless is the first true 3G wireless broadband consumer multimedia service in the country, allowing customers to view crystal clear video clips on demand because it runs on Verizon Wireless' Evolution-Data Optimized (EV-DO) network -- the only widely available wide-area wireless broadband network in the United States.

Premiering exclusively on V CAST in the V CAST Showcase Channel on Wednesday, February 9, "The Sunset Hotel" is a gorgeous upscale hotel for the Los Angeles elite. Jack, its bartender, is impossibly out of his league when he falls in love with a hotel call girl, Bianca Novak. Both are entangled in a complex web when one of the hotel guests is murdered, and the jealous and vicious hotel manager, Peter, makes it his mission to exploit the situation with manipulation and blackmail. Peter had best watch his back, however, or he could be the next death at "The Sunset Hotel."

Premiering exclusively in the V CAST Showcase Channel on Thursday, February 10, "Love and Hate" follows the daily lives of a fictitious family over the course of six months, during which cameras document the emotional strains placed upon them by the many trials and tribulations the family members are experiencing. The improvised soap opera takes an up close and personal point-of-view of the destruction of son Allen's marriage between his wife Elizabeth and carefree daughter Lauryn's unexpected engagement to her newfound boyfriend, Paul.

"Love and Hate" introduces Twentieth Television's groundbreaking production approach it calls "manipulated reality," in which cast members work without a script and involve everyday citizens into their improvised performances and the series' storyline. "The Sunset Hotel" is entirely scripted.

Each Wednesday, the next new **mobisode** in "The Sunset Hotel" series will be available on V CAST, followed each Thursday by a new episode of "Love and Hate." Customers will be able to view two weeks worth of each **mobisode** on V CAST -- the latest **mobisode** and the previous **mobisode** will be available, enabling customers to look back one week before seeing the new **mobisode**.

The V CAST coverage area, which mirrors Verizon Wireless' EV-DO network, is available in more than 30 major metropolitan markets and covers more than 75 million people. For \$15.00 monthly access added to their Verizon Wireless calling plan, customers get the V CAST VPak

which includes unlimited access to a wide array of more than 300 daily updated video clips from leading content providers. Unlimited basic video clips are included, but application download fees will still apply for 3D games, premium video clips, and all other Get It Now(R) applications. There are no airtime charges to download, stream and watch "The Sunset Hotel," "Love and Hate" and other V CAST content. For a limited time, customers who sign up for V CAST will receive two months of service free. Verizon Wireless V CAST customers also receive monthly access and unlimited browsing on Verizon Wireless' Mobile Web 2.0(SM) news and information service. In addition, customers can choose from premium video clip content, available at additional cost that will include music videos and more.

V CAST's array of hot new multimedia programming is located in the Get It Now virtual store -- customers can access video clips from favorite news, sports and entertainment providers in the getVIDEO shopping aisle and check out new cutting-edge 3D games in the getGAMES aisle. V CAST also gives customers unlimited airtime to browse applications in the other familiar Get It Now shopping aisles -- such as getTONES and getGOING -- but application download fees still apply.

V CAST customers can find "The Sunset Hotel" and "Love and Hate" in the V CAST Showcase Channel on the new 3G-capable VX8000 phone. With the LG VX8000, V CAST customers can stream **mobisodes** and other video with just a few clicks and experience outstanding clarity and sharpness. The LG VX8000 is available to Verizon Wireless customers for \$199.99 after \$70 rebate with a two-year customer agreement.

For more information on Verizon Wireless products and services, visit a Verizon Wireless Communications Store, call 1-800-2 JOIN IN or go to <http://www.verizonwireless.com/>.

About Verizon Wireless

Verizon Wireless owns and operates the nation's most reliable wireless network, serving 43.8 million voice and data customers. Headquartered in Bedminster, NJ, Verizon Wireless is a joint venture of Verizon Communications (NYSE:VZ) and Vodafone (NYSE and LSE: VOD). Find more information on the Web at <http://www.verizonwireless.com/>. To receive broadcast-quality video footage of Verizon Wireless operations, log on to the Verizon Wireless Multimedia Library at <http://www.verizonwireless.com/multimedia>.

About Twentieth Television

A leader in the domestic program production and distribution arena, Twentieth Television provides a wide array of first-run and off-network programming, as well as feature film packages to the syndication and cable marketplaces. First-run programming distributed by Twentieth Television includes "Good Day Live," "Divorce Court," "Texas Justice," "Ambush Makeover," the daily lifestyle program "Live Like A Star" and home makeover program "Design Invasion." One of the top suppliers of off-net product in the U.S., Twentieth Television also distributes the smash off-net hit sitcom "The Simpsons," as well as "Reba," "Yes, Dear," "The Bernie Mac Show," "King of the Hill," "Dharma & Greg" and "Malcolm in the Middle"; and spearheaded the precedent-setting off-net debuts of the ground-breaking dramas "The Practice," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," "The X-Files" and "Angel." The company is currently distributing "24" for a fall 2005 launch in off-net syndication.

About News Corporation

The News Corporation Limited (NYSE:NWS)(NYSE:NWS.A)(ASX:NCP)(ASX:NCPDP), parent company of Twentieth Television, had total assets as of June 30, 2004 of approximately US\$52 billion and total annual revenues of approximately US\$20 billion. News Corporation is a diversified international media and entertainment company with operations in eight industry segments: filmed entertainment; television; cable network programming; direct broadcast satellite television; magazines and inserts; newspapers; book publishing; and other. The activities of News Corporation are conducted principally in the United States, Continental Europe, the United Kingdom, Australia, Asia and the Pacific Basin.

For more information, please visit <http://www.newscorp.com/> .

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SOURCE Verizon Wireless

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

NOTES: NOTE TO EDITORS: High-resolution images of "The Sunset Hotel" and "Love and Hate" on V CAST are available online. Log on to <http://www.verizonwireless.com/multimedia> to preview and request images.

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Advertising Age

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HEADLINE: Music, film, TV heed ringtones' call; 'Mobisodes,' games are hot tools to micromarket array of mobile devices

BYLINE: MARC GRASER

BODY:

Advertisers seeking new ways to spread their marketing messages may have to look no further than the next generation of cell phones, and that potential extends into branded entertainment.

Improved handsets-with faster processors; larger, higher-resolution screens; and high-speed Web access-are rolling out as wireless service providers finally introduce third-generation, or 3G , technology to the U.S. By 2006, technology experts say, about 70% of cell phones will have built-in digital TV receivers.

The entertainment industry is taking advantage of the new offerings, with cell phones becoming a lucrative new method to market and distribute content.

Record labels are growing "ringback" tones, which have soared to a \$3 billion worldwide industry and are expected to make up 12% of total music sales by 2008, according to a study by Baskerville/Informa Media. Cell phone providers are rolling out ringback tone services that would replace dial tones with songs as callers wait for a caller to pick up.

At the studios, News Corp.'s 20th Century Fox signed a two-year worldwide deal with wireless entertainment publisher Sorrent to create mobile games, ringtones and other content based on its films. Other studios like Walt Disney Co., NBC Universal's Universal Pictures, and Time Warner's New Line Cinema and Warner Bros. have also signed individual deals to promote their films via content distributed onto mobile devices.

short version of '24'

Among the major broadcast TV networks, News Corp.'s Fox has started to experiment with producing what it calls "**mobisodes**," or short versions of TV shows. Fox is partnering with Vodafone and Verizon to distribute "24: Conspiracy," an original live-action series based on its hit show "24." The 24-episode series of 1-minute shows is available to subscribers in 23 countries. Networks are also gearing up to begin broadcasting live TV signals to cell phone screens. But so far, Sprint Corp. and AT&T Wireless have been the only U.S. carriers to offer live TV on phones.

All this is good news for marketers looking to promote their brands to customers. And industry observers expect advertisers will quickly find an audience for their wares.

The media marketplace in 2005 will be transformed by a "steady disappearance of the mass market, replaced by an ever-growing number of micromarkets that cater to the needs of specific groups or individuals," Tony Kern, deputy managing partner of Deloitte's Technology, Media & Telecommunications practice, predicts in a media industry report. "New devices and media will flourish, along with new forms of advertising, including embedded advertisements in video games, software and even mobile phones."

The broadcast of live TV also will mean that traditional 30-second spots will have a new outlet for exposure. Entertainment content could start seeking promotional partners. Industry observers say that it's only a matter of time before advertisers start launching their own branded channels of short-form content on phones, turning mobile devices into a new outlet for branded entertainment.

"That's absolutely where things are going," says Peter Levin, a partner at Quattro Media, a Los Angeles-based entertainment company that has brokered cell phone content deals in Asia for such clients as animation house Wild Brain. "You will see free sponsored channels. You'll have access to a suite of content offerings where the brand is embedded in the content and also the template of what you're looking at."

GRAPHIC: Direct dial: '24: Conspiracy' goes mobile.

LOAD-DATE: February 09, 2005