

# Mobile Entertainment: Challenges and Possibilities

## Consumer Foresight

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### Consumer's Future Possibles

**Foresight** is a series of methods and tool for creating future-orientated scenarios at national, regional and sectoral levels. However, consumers are rarely consulted in traditional foresight exercises. Here we explore the possibility of using foresight to **understand the role of consumer expectations** in the consumption/assimilation patterns and general perceptions of end-users with regards mobile entertainment.

Despite the acceptance of customer orientation in product development there has been little work on the involvement of consumers further down the consumption chain - namely at pre-product development stage.

In our view, consumer consultation concerning the future of mobile entertainment should go *beyond* traditional market research activities and laboratory-setting user trials. It should seek to build a holistic approach to consumer involvement when producing ideas about future directions.

### Consumer Foresight

Consumer foresight can offer **innovative solutions** to some of the problems faced by the Mobile Entertainment (ME) industry today. In mGain's research consumers were asked to imagine a mobile (entertainment) technology, application or service that may have aided them in their undertaking of any activity during the past week. Further they were supported in developing mini-scenarios for near future possibles for mobile technologies.

By situating the question in consumers' everyday activities it was hoped that consumers would imagine near-future-possible devices of more analytical use to the European mobile entertainment industry than wholly fantastical ones.

Following a series of 12 focus groups with European consumers, we suggest:

- Consumers are relatively aware of the possibility of domestic and mobile technologies being networked, and create their own micro-scale future-possible scenarios to imagine what it would be like to use such technologies.

For further information on topics raised here see "Mobile Entertainment: Concepts and Culture" at [www.mgain.org](http://www.mgain.org)

- When imagining the future consumers tend to work with **'evolutionary' concepts of technological progress** rather than envisaging disruptive breaks.
- Features of contemporary mobile entertainment devices are **extrapolated to the future**. So users imagined a (near) future in which cameras in phones will become ubiquitous and will converge with existing digital photography devices.
- For consumers **devices with more memory and greater storage capacity are key indicators of progress** and the future. With experience of other networked technologies such as PCs becoming faster, consumers expect the same 'evolutionary' process to occur in relation to mobile entertainment technologies.
- Consumers continue to expect mobile services to **evolve toward flawlessness** with 3G solving the problems of WAP and 4G solving the problems experienced by its predecessor.
- Consumers' highlight **privacy issues** surrounding new mobile entertainment technologies. Whilst consumers may embrace picture phones they still express concerns about their use now and in the future.
- Some consumers indicated their preference for **'futuristic' phones**. This seemed to entail 'futuristic signifiers' such as shiny silver cases and 'flip-tops'.

Whilst consumer foresight is no more a game of predicting the future than other forms of foresight research it is apparent that knowledge of consumer expectations can help the mobile entertainment industry focus on those issues that are of concern to their end-user base. Directing technical and market developments towards fulfilling consumers' expectations of the future will support diffusion and adoption of new mobile technologies and services.

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