

## **This Week's Stories**

### **Skype Threatens Fring with Legal Action Over Video Calling App**

July 12, 2010

Is Fring a victim of too much popularity or a startup that neglected to follow technology licensing procedures? Just days after announcing that Apple had approved the company's third-party video-calling application for the iPhone--running over AT&T Mobility's 3G network in addition to WiFi networks--Fring said it has been forced to stop its interconnection to Skype, because Skype is threatening legal action.

Fring said it saw a huge spike in video calling after Apple approved its app. Fring claims Skype's efforts to block its calls amounts to an "anti-competitive ambush."

Skype, however, said the problem is not popularity but that the company believes Fring is breaching its API Terms of Use and End User License Agreement. In a written statement, a Skype spokesperson said, "Skype is disappointed that an amicable resolution was not possible, but Fring's decision to withdraw Skype functionality immediately was of its own choice. Skype encourages developers to build products that work with Skype in accordance with our various API licenses. However, Skype will rigorously protect its brand and reputation and those companies that do not comply with our terms will be subject to enforcement."

Meanwhile, Fring said that since 2006 the company's app has been available to both Fring users and third-party networks such as GoogleTalk, SIP, Twitter and, until now, Skype. "We are disappointed that Skype, who once championed the cause of openness, is now attempting to muzzle competition, even to the detriment of its own users," said Avi Shechter, Fring's co-founder and CEO.

<http://www.fiercewireless.com>

### **Google Asks FCC to Open Video Device Market**

July 14, 2010

Google believes that consumers' ability to search for video content using set-top boxes is limited by the absence of a competitive market place for video devices.

In comments submitted on Tuesday to the Federal Communications Commission, Google voices its support for a proposed standard called AllVid that describes an open interface for consumer video network equipment.

"Generally, there are few technical impediments today to building a search index that combines both broadcast and Internet content, so that users can search for accurate and up-to-date information about the availability of video across different platforms," Google says. "Too often, however, consumers are constrained from easily navigating the universe of available video content on the platform of their choosing."

Google has an interest in blurring the line between TV and the Internet. The company's forthcoming Google TV platform -- backed by partners like Sony and Logitech -- aims to offer access to TV content and Internet content through a single interface, and to allow TV equipment to act as a digital music player, game console, and Web browser.

To encourage the creation of Web applications for Google TV, Google plans to release TV-related APIs and, next year, an updated Android SDK that will support Google TV applications.

Google's comments come in response to a Notice of Inquiry published by the FCC in April. The agency asked for input on a proposed plan to make the market for retail set-top devices competitive. The FCC believes that the existing CableCARD standard has failed to produce a competitive market for set-top hardware.

"Consumers want devices that can navigate the universe of video programming from all of these sources and present the choices to them in a simple, integrated way," said FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski in statement in April. "They also want to know that they can buy a device and not have to replace it if they change video providers."

As it stands, devices that present content carried by multichannel video programming distributor ("MVPD") services require negotiation with each service. Accessing content from Comcast, for example, requires Comcast-approved hardware.

Adopting a standard like AllVid would make video content as accessible as Internet content on a technical level. It would not mean free cable service; but it would allow pay TV customers to use hardware from any manufacturer. It would also allow consumers to switch services without replacing their video network hardware.

Google is also backing the standardization of video metadata, which the company says should include closed captioning and content format information.

Google is preparing to enter the video device market in a big way and it would like the FCC to help it get there.

"Just as the FCC over 40 years ago mandated the right to attach any non-harmful device to the wireline telephone network, and more recently adopted a policy statement and proposed similar rules for devices in the broadband context, so too should the same overarching openness rationale extend to the video device marketplace," Google says.

<http://www.informationweek.com>

## **Product & Service News**

### **Virgin Launches \$20 per month PayLo Plan**

July 15, 2010

Sprint Nextel's Virgin Mobile brand is going after the low end of the market with a new "sub-brand" called PayLo that is offering two low-cost plans targeted at the budget-conscious. PayLo will be sold in drug chains and convenience stores as well as RadioShack and Best Buy.

One PayLo option offers 400 minutes for \$20 per month with minutes as low as 5 cents per minute. The second plan costs \$20 but provides 90 days of activation with minutes at a base rate of 20 cents each. PayLo handsets include the LG101 for \$19.99 and the Samsung M340 for \$39.99. PayLo customers can add minutes to their account with Top-Up cards. They can also add text messaging for 15 cents per message and picture messaging for 25 cents per message. Data access costs \$1.50 per megabyte.

Last May Sprint unveiled a multi-brand prepaid wireless strategy with the goal of segmenting the market and establishing distinct brands. The plan included a full relaunch of the Virgin Mobile brand, with new phones and service plans, as well as the Common Cents Mobile brand aimed at the pay-per-minute prepaid market. Sprint, which has relied on prepaid for growth as it continues to struggle with postpaid subscriber defections, is also pushing its Boost Mobile brand as well as the Assurance Wireless brand, which is aimed at low-income customers.

<http://www.fiercewireless.com>

## **Mergers/Acquisitions/Partnerships**

### **Nokia Sells MetaCarta 3 Months After Acquisition**

July 12, 2010

Nokia Corp., the world's biggest mobile phone maker, on Monday said it has sold MetaCarta Inc., a location-based search service it acquired just three months ago.

The buyer is Qbase Holdings LLC, a U.S. company. Terms were not disclosed.

Nokia, which is based in Finland, said it is keeping Qbase's "geographic intelligence technology" incorporating it in local search and other services.

Privately held MetaCarta, in Cambridge, Mass., serves government and the oil and gas industry and employs about 30 people.

<http://www.wirelessweek.com>

### **Tyco Electronics to Acquire ADC for \$1.25 Billion**

July 13, 2010

Tyco Electronics reported Tuesday that it plans to acquire network infrastructure connectivity provider ADC for \$1.25 billion.

Tyco Electronics said it has entered into "a definitive agreement" to acquire the Eden Prairie, Minn., firm and that, after customary closing conditions, the deal is expected to close in the fourth quarter. Now based in Switzerland, Tyco Electronics spun off from Tyco International.

Tyco Electronics said the addition of ADC's broadband connectivity products will position Tyco Electronics Network Solutions as a leading international provider of connectivity products to carrier and enterprise networks.

"ADC is a great fit as we continue to execute our strategy to create strong leadership positions in all of our connectivity businesses," said Tom Lynch, CEO of Tyco Electronics, in a statement. "Consumers and enterprises want access to high-speed video and data where ever they are, on whatever devices they are using -- from smartphones to [high definition] and 3-D televisions to computers with advanced video-conferencing capabilities."

The combined operations of the two companies will establish complete connectivity product portfolios in major geographic markets, the firms said. ADC's distributed antenna system products will expand Tyco Electronics' existing wireless portfolio, which addresses the growing mobility demands of carrier and enterprise customers. ADC's professional services organization in the United States will be added to Tyco's business.

Tyco's bid for ADC resulted in a 44% premium in ADC's Monday closing stock price. Tyco said the ADC acquisition is expected to be accretive to Tyco's earnings in the first year of the deal. The deal is being announced as a tender offer and it will be followed by a merger.

<http://www.informationweek.com>

## **Droid X Lands at Verizon**

July 15, 2010

The Droid X, Motorola's follow-up to the original Motorola Droid, lands on shelves today. The new phone is available online and in Verizon Wireless Communications Stores for \$199.99 after a \$100 mail-in rebate with a new two-year customer agreement.

The Droid X features a 4.3-inch touchscreen, 8-megapixel camera, HDMI output, 3G Mobile hot spot capabilities and comes standard with 8 GB of memory expandable up to 32GB via microSDHC card. The Droid X runs Android 2.1 (Eclair), but will receive an OTA update to Android version 2.2 (Froyo) later this summer.

An update supporting Flash 10.1 also will be delivered OTA in the near future.

Customers can take advantage of the 4.3-inch high-resolution screen on Droid X for viewing the latest movies from Blockbuster On Demand presented by V Cast Video.

Customers who choose to add the optional 3G Mobile HotSpot service to their Droid X will pay \$20 per month for the service. The 32GB SanDisk microSDHC card is available for \$99.99 when purchased along with the new Droid X or for \$149.99 when purchased separately.

Verizon is allowing customers who have contracts ending by Dec. 31, 2010, to upgrade to Droid X without penalty.

The Droid X enters the summer smartphone fray with strong competition from other OEMs, most notably the HTC Evo 4G from Sprint, Apple's iPhone 4 and the Galaxy S devices from Samsung.

<http://www.wirelessweek.com>

## **Industry News**

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### **iTunes Users Want Music Subscription Service**

July 14, 2010

A significant number of Apple's 50 million iTunes users in the United States would seriously consider signing up for a paid subscription service that would give them access to music stored in the cloud, a survey shows.

Between 7 million and 8 million iTunes users would be willing to pay a minimum monthly fee of \$10 for either streaming music or access to their personal music libraries on multiple devices, which would certainly include Apple's iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch, according to The NPD Group's "iTunes Usage Report," released Wednesday. If accessing one's personal library online was free, than the number of interested iTunes users jumps to between 13 million and 15 million.

The numbers are significant as Apple reportedly considers launching a music subscription service. Such speculation went into high gear last December when Apple bought an online music service called LaLa. Apple closed the site May 31, but has yet to announce its plans.

NPD says the number of iTunes users who would sign-up for an Apple-provided, web-based music service could rise even higher, as customers upgrade to new Internet-connected devices and experience the convenience of cloud-based services.

actually adopted one of those services at \$10 per month, the market opportunity is close to \$1 billion in the first year, which is roughly two-thirds the revenue garnered by the current pay-per-download model," NPD analyst Russ Crupnick said in a statement.

Apple currently offers digital music only for purchase through iTunes. NPD said it doesn't know what impact a subscription service would have on its current business, or whether the latter would increase overall music spending on the store.

Nevertheless, as the number of web-enabled devices grows, the demand for streaming music is expected to also increase. Forrester Research predicts the number of people subscribing to music services will increase to more than 5 million by 2014 from 2.1 million today.

<http://www.informationweek.com/>

## From Texting to Apps, Cell Phones Used for Health

July 14, 2010

What if my blood sugar's too high today? Is it time for my blood pressure pill? With nagging text messages or more customized two-way interactions, researchers are trying to harness the power of cell phones to help fight chronic diseases.

"I call it medical minutes," says Dr. Richard Katz of George Washington University Hospital in the nation's capital.

He's testing whether inner-city diabetics, an especially hard-to-treat population, might better control their blood sugar -- and thus save Medicaid dollars -- by tracking their disease using Internet-connected cell phones, provided with reduced monthly rates as long as they regularly comply.

Consider Tyrone Harvey, 43, who learned he had diabetes seven years ago only after getting so sick he was hospitalized for a week, and who has struggled to lower his blood sugar ever since. In May, through a study Katz began with nearby Howard University Hospital's diabetes clinic, Harvey received a Web-based personal health record that he clicks onto using his cell phone, to record his daily blood sugar measurements.

If Harvey enters a reading higher or lower than preset danger thresholds, a text message automatically pings a warning, telling him what to do. And at checkups, doctors will use the personal health record, created by Indiana-based NoMoreClipboard.com, to track all his fluctuations and decide what next steps to advise.

"Hopefully you're paying more attention to your numbers, too," says Howard's Dr. Gail Nunlee-Bland, whose clinic uses an electronic health record -- your official medical history -- that can automatically link to NoMoreClipboard's consumer version and update it with things like medication changes.

The trend is called mobile health or, to use tech-

speak, mHealth. If you're a savvy smartphone user, you've probably seen lots of apps that claim to help your health or fitness goals -- using your phone like a pedometer or an alarm clock to signal when it's time to take your medicine.

Katz and other researchers are going a step further, scientifically testing whether more personalized cell phone-based programs can link patients' own care with their doctors' disease-management efforts in ways that might provide lasting health improvement.

"Mobile phones provide that opportunity for persons to get the feedback they need when they need it," explains Charlene Quinn, an assistant professor at the University of Maryland medical school, who is testing a competing cell phone diabetes system from Baltimore-based Welldoc Inc.

After all, most of the population now carries a cell phone. Accessing the Internet with them is on the rise, too -- nearly 40 percent of cell callers do, the Pew Internet & American Life Project reported last week -- allowing more sophisticated digital health contact.

On the other hand, older adults are less likely to use smartphones. So are people who are sicker, with multiple chronic diseases, says Dr. Joseph Kvedar, director of the Center for Connected Health, a division of Boston's Partners Healthcare.

Kvedar notes that nearly any phone can handle simpler text-messaging programs. Among the biggest offered to date is the free text4baby, where government-vetted health tips timed to pregnant women's due dates are texted weekly to about 50,000 participants so far.

Do these kinds of technologies work? There's some short-term evidence, although no one knows if people stick with it once the novelty wears off:

-In a study of 70 Boston residents to improve cancer-preventing use of sunscreen, Kvedar found daily texts with reminders hooked to the weather forecast for six weeks increased sunscreen use by 40 percent.

-Researchers at New York's Mount Sinai Medical Center found episodes of rejection dropped when they texted take-your-medicine reminders to 41 pediatric liver transplant recipients or their caregivers, adding another text nag to the parent if teen patients didn't quickly respond that they'd taken their dose.

-The University of California, San Diego, went a step further, designing a text-message program to encourage weight loss where participants texted back answers to such questions as "Did you buy fresh raw

vegetables to snack on this week?" Answering allowed more customized texted diet tips. In a pilot study of 75 people, text-message recipients lost about four more pounds in four months than those given printed dieting advice.

-The Internet-based approach offers even more two-way interaction. This fall, Quinn will report results of a 260-patient study using a range of Welldoc phone features, including more real-time monitoring of the blood sugar fluctuations users enter. A small Welldoc pilot study found users' average blood sugar dropped over three months.

"What systems work best with patients has yet to be figured out," says George Washington's Katz, who is testing a version of that program, too -- and worries not just about affordability when his study is over but whether interest will wane. "Otherwise, they find it's a nice toy to start with, and forget about it."

<http://www.mobile-tech-today.com>



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