

The use of modern mobile applications in making leisure services more attractive

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Abstract

The paper aims to present mobile applications from the perspective of their definitions, their types, potential development directions in the Polish market. Mobile applications are created for smart phones or tablets. According to various research, smart phones support traditional phones in Poland and are of greater and greater importance. They are not only used for voice communication but for sending text messages, they play the role of an organizer or a small computer. Today a mobile phone is the main carrier of information to and from the environment. The paper describes selected applications and indicates ways they can contribute to attract and keep customers of leisure services. The method of analyzing existing technical solutions in mobile applications was applied. The paper reviews and presents selected mobile applications in leisure services market showing their advantages and disadvantages. The conclusions formulated may be useful to leisure companies which today think about developing their own offer using possibilities of mobile devices.

Keywords: Marketing, leisure services, recreation, a mobile application, mobile devices

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Introduction

Development of the internet is not about winning new users but offering them contents in any place. It means that an average internet user makes use of its resources not only in a particular place and time but constantly on-line. It is encouraged by the sales of mobile devices equipped with technical possibilities of connecting to the internet wirelessly. It is difficult these days to find people who do not have a mobile phone in industrialized (and apart from them) countries. More often old models are replaced by the so called smart phones whose functionality resembles personal computers. They enable users to connect to the internet, take pictures, take notes and use many programmes that used to be available on desktops. Mobile devices take advantage over desktops as they are perceived as more convenient to use. We speak about an intuitional usage that results from leaving a linear contents for the sake of icons. More sophisticated mobile

applications come out offering more functionalities on mobile devices making them similar to those offered by personal computer.

The paper aims to present mobile applications from the perspective of their definitions, their importance to mobile marketing development in the Polish market. It reviews and presents selected mobile applications in leisure services market showing their advantages and disadvantages.

The paper does not exhaust the topic raised, however it indicates a direction of changes in the Polish market when it comes to creating mobile applications dedicated to leisure services. It presents benefits and limitations of mobile applications and shows expected development directions of mobile applications and possibilities of their dissemination in leisure services.

The essence of mobile marketing

According to the American Marketing Association, the essence of marketing lies in

the exchange process which is to provide participants of the exchange with satisfaction [AMA]. In the contemporary world satisfaction of participants in the exchange becomes crucial. Priority is given to activities affecting its enhancement, anticipating customers' needs, adjusting the offer to personalized expectations of an individual. Mass marketing actions are being replaced by individual marketing. Such a change is possible thanks to development of technologies and a much easier identification of individual customers and their needs. Undoubtedly, development of internet has contributed to it, possibilities it offers as well as customers' interests in using mobile devices (i.e. smart phones, tablets) which enable using internet resources any time and place. Magdalena Kachniewska thinks there is the fourth wave of digitalization making access to mobile devices more popular and contributing to a growth in the interest in m-commerce (Kachniewska 2014: s. 87).

Observed changes to patterns in consumer behaviour related to the possession of mobile devices are also tied to the way www is used. Mobile technologies contribute to eliminating limitations in using the internet in specific places (Porębska-Miąc: 2010, p. 1). They provide a consumer with unlimited access to information, he or she is no longer passive in receiving marketing messages but thanks to technology is active in creating messages and sharing opinions. It means that the importance of mobile marketing is growing which together with a marketing message reaches recipients through a mobile device (Konkol: 2010, p. 49). The most popular mobile marketing tools comprise (Królewski, Sala 2014, s. 122-123):

- SMS/MMS,
- mobile applications,
- mobile services,
- Bluetooth,
- NFC,
- photocodes,
- m-coupons,
- advertisements in mobile networks.

The above mobile marketing tools enable the usage of various features of devices. SMSes consist in sending marketing text messages, often of promotional nature e.g. information about discounts for selected products. In the Polish market MMSes, sending pictures, are less common. According to Jacek Kall, MMSes are 1/5 more effective as compared to SMSes. They enrich the text with a picture, sound and animation (Kall: 2014, s. 252). Mobile marketing actions based on Bluetooth or NFC rely on sending promotional messages in the near field. However they

require the recipient to possess such solutions (switched on) in the mobile device. Photocodes are used in marketing communication as a way of combining reality with virtuality. They are most often placed in traditional marketing materials (press) and they are to encourage the customer to familiarize with extended information about the product and the brand on the internet (Nogiec: 2014, s. 05). According to Andrzej Sznajder, we are starting the next stage in development of technologies where the use of mobile devices is more widespread thanks to specially elaborated applications (Sznajder: 2014, p. 16).

Development of mobile marketing in Poland would not be possible without development of technology. According the Report on Mobile Marketing in Poland in 2014, 44 percent of Poles had smart phones (25% in 2012, 33% in the beginning of 2013, according forecasts 60% in 2015) (Jestem.mobi: 2014).

Mobile applications

Most common mobile marketing tools include applications. They are most often the means of real world penetrating the virtual one [Sznajder 2013, p. 50]. Originally of entertainment nature, sometimes educational, they begin to carry out business goals of an enterprise. Every year their importance grows (number of downloads) and they seem to gradually become the most important m-marketing.

A mobile application is a type of software dedicated to mobile devices (Life in Mobile). According to Natalia Piechota it can be "any device, a resource, a game, a social network or any others that may be downloaded for money or free of charge into a wireless device adding a function or another option of using a particular device" (Piechota: 2014, p. 119). In order to use an application, one has to download it from an online store (the so called app-shop) and install it. Logging into an online store is not usually a hindrance, however simplicity of installing is one of the main advantages of mobile applications (FND).

According to Maciej Czernik there are three types of mobile applications: web apps, native apps and hybrid apps. A web application is a www adjusted to requirements of a device looking and behaving similarly to mobile applications. Such an application is written in HTML5 and run by a browser. A native application makes use of mobile possibilities. It is created in the language appropriate to a particular platform and can used offline. As one can imagine,

a hybrid application combines functionalities of web and native applications. Most often they are written in web languages, run by a browser but they have a dedicated application. It seems that they are the future of these types of solutions (Czerniak).

Mam Startup manual suggests a different division of mobile applications. It divided them into four groups (Biegun):

- applications solving users' problems e.g. a weather applications, messages sending applications, banking applications,
- games- making use of a game, entertainment for acquiring users, it usually requires the use of more advanced technological solutions as compared to classical applications so the entire process is more time consuming and more expensive,
- applications supporting business operations, not always generating profits for a company (a brand) e.g. an application which aims to encourage users to visit point of service more often, marketing applications,
- applications used in the company timing to optimize resources owned.
- It is possible to divide mobile applications with regard of the cost of downloading – applications which are free of charge and payable ones that their creators want to generate income. However according to Michael Tasner sales of applications is one of possible ways of earning money however giving access to them for free is more efficient (Tasner: 2011, p. 181). According to MEC smart phones owners appreciate applications and most willingly install them free of charge however one third of them is ready to pay for them (Brzozowska-Woś: 2012, p. 37).

According to Chip magazine quoting Gartner's report, 102 billion mobile applications were downloaded in 2013 in the entire world [Chip: 2014]. In line with Apple's data „each second customers download more than 800 applications from the App Store which equals more than two billion applications per month” [Apple]. However according to raportu Komisji Europejskiej, revenues from the mobile applications market in the UE countries in 2014 amounted to 17.5 billion euro and in 2018 they will reach 63 billion euro and the sector will employ about 5 million people. The UE market accounts for 43 percent of global revenues in the consumer applications market. It results from a growing popularity of mobile applications (Chip 2014).

As the report on Mobile Marketing in Poland says almost half of Poles uses mobile

applications in 2014 whereas every other Pole has declared using such solutions in the near future. Applications are more often used by men than women (24 percent vs. 14 percent) and by young people (37 percent aged 16-21 vs. 7 percent of 51-60 year olds). According to Tomasz Wanat, men usually show greater interest (compared to women) in modern technologies and also use their functionalities for other purposes (Wanat: 2014, p. 265). Such a profile of the main user of mobile applications is not surprising as usually men are interested in technological novelties whereas the younger ones look for new trends and often create them.

According to the Report of Generation Mobile 2014 a person possessing a mobile device most often has up to 9 applications installed (Generation Mobile: 2014, p. 40) and these are application which can be installed free of charge. The same report says that Poles are less interested in payable applications- in 2012 26 percent whereas in 2014 only 17 percent. This drop may result from an improving accessibility of interesting and attractive applications free of charge. Together with a growth in the number of free applications a percentage of users of payable applications may decline (not necessarily the number of downloads). Magazine Komputer Świat anticipates that in 2016 the number of downloads of mobile applications will exceed 200 billion in the world and free applications downloads will constitute a significant majority (Komputer Świat).

According to IAB report, applications keep changing the way the worldwide web is used. There is a phenomenon of leaving a traditional way of using www through browsers for the sake of using applications giving access to selected functions or contents. This phenomenon is called „appification” and in experts' views it will be stronger over the next years. Traditional websites are even anticipated to stop functioning in the near future. Convenience and attractiveness of applications make users naturally turn to more functional solutions in the areas (IAB: 2014, s. 4).

Presented trends in Poland and the world indicate that popularity of mobile applications free of charge will be growing. It does not mean that it will not pay for enterprises to create them. It may turn out that creators of applications will offer them to users not for direct profits (often one time) but or long-term benefits of material and non-material nature. A material benefit may involve user's loyalty, his or her commitment to the products and a willingness to buy once again. It translates into an additional income for

the enterprise. Very often an application makes a product or a service attractive, its extended version enabling monitoring customer's actions after the purchase providing information that in the future will reach him or her with a personalized message. A non-material benefit involves prestige and perceiving the application creator as an innovator in his segment.

Table 1 presents benefits and limitations characterizing mobile applications. With regard to limitations, factors connected to technology and user's barriers are essential (e.g. no knowledge about such possibilities as well as the lack of confidence in its functionality). On the benefits' side there is user's engagement into a service, building long-term relations with him or her. Interpersonal relations used to constitute the basis for commerce and exchange and nowadays technical devices and their extended functionalities play such a role.

The mobile application in recreation services can be useful in the area of wellness, SPA, fitness but also as a tool of promoting sport activity.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the main problem in creating and developing mobile applications is the fact that there are various operating systems for mobile devices in the market. The most popular ones are Android – according to Chip system monthly it is installed in 84.6% of devices in the world (Chip: 2015), Windows Phone (functioning in Nokia devices) and iOS (functioning in Apple devices).

Examples of applications in leisure services

Based on the market observations, we may conclude that mobile applications previously became popular with tourist services rather than leisure ones. The growth of tourism importance as an industry as well as changing trends in travelling has led to a natural development

of mobile applications in tourism and travelling (thus the popularity of maps, locations services, mobile guides enabling visiting particular places or museums). Next, development of applications for leisure services is observed. In this area applications for healthy eating and facilitating diet compliance are dominant (e.g. calories calculators) as well as applications for doing sport (e.g. stepometers, personal trainers). According to a report of „Aplikacje & Fitness” the most sought after types of applications (for sport and fitness) motivate to action, offer distance meters, diet programmes as well as contain dedicated sets of exercises (Aplikacje Sport & Fitness 2013, p. 4). They support a healthy life style rather than promote a specific products or leisure services.

The Polish market also observes applications promoting not merely specific leisure services but interests in this area- for example mobile applications of the Polish Golf Association or an angler's assistant.

The Angler's Assistant (Pomocnik wędkarza) has been developed by CodeExpert and can be downloaded from Goole Play. According to statistics January 2015 the application was downloaded 50 thousand times and obtained rating 4.3 (on the scale up to five). 1564 users rated the application under the category of sport. It includes news from the Polish Angling Association service however it is not an equivalent to its website. This application is a tool facilitating angling that is why it contains several useful features like a log, a fish atlas or ways of tying nods. Moreover it has a promotion section presenting offers for angling gear (Antyapps). It shows that this application despite being for free may contribute to generating money benefits.

The Polish Golf Association offers downloading a simple application from Google Play which is a lighter version of a website service. According

Table 1. List of benefits and limitations of mobile applications

| Benefits | Limitations |
|--|--|
| building relations with customers | problems with access to the internet |
| enhancing experience of customers | poor technology- www pretending mobile applications |
| making marketing communication easier and more attractive | functionality dependent on the equipment the user has |
| introducing play elements, competition, gamification | a comparatively small informational /educational value of currently offered solutions |
| extending the role of a customer from a 'viewer' into a „user” | various operational systems require creation of various versions of the same application (more expensive realizations) |

Source: Elaboration of one's own based on Michael Tasner, Blitzmarketing. Praktyczny przewodnik po narzędziach WEB 3.0, Wolters Kluwer, Warsaw 2011, p. 184.

to statistics January 2015, this application was downloaded 100 times and got a rating 4.3 (on the scale up to five). 15 users rated it under the category of sport. The application aims to deliver current information about golf, tournament offers as well as a ranking of best players. It also contains basic rules of golf which may be useful during amateur competitions – in disputable situations players can consult the manual in the field. The application is to sophisticated technologically, imposes a vertical layout of the page, plays an informational role and offers basic information.

Silesia Marathon is an example of application preparing for a marathon and supporting runners during the marathon. It was developed by JCommerce for Silesia Pro Active foundation. It offers functions such as: news from the marathon website, a runner's account, statistics concerning future events, an interactive map of the marathon, a training log and a weather forecast.

Summary

The paper presents trends dominant in Poland and the world in relation to changing ways of using the internet. The traditional way of using the www is being abandoned for the sake of a mobile access. Development of technology encourages it by sophisticated mobile devices appearing in the market – a traditional mobile phone supported by the so called smartphone. Moreover there is a growing number of people possessing a tablet in the Polish market. Changes to patterns of behaviour as well as lower prices for these devices are depriving the devices of their premium category and make them common.

Patterns of using a mobile phone (a smartphone) are changing. It is not longer used for phone calls only – that is one of its functions. Other functionalities are used more extensively, particularly those based on the wireless access to the internet: browsing websites, being active on social networking sites, checking an electronic mailbox or using mobile applications.

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Mobile applications are becoming more popular every year. They are offered through operating systems and platforms such as Android, iOS, Windows Phone (three most popular ones in Poland- Android is a leading one). Originally as an entertainment and play form, they are becoming business ventures. Still most of them are offered free of charge however as an excuse of entertainment they introduce business content. Companies look for various ways of attaching a user to selected products or services and by means of applications provide them with specific marketing contents. The interest and willingness to download applications are growing. This may result from poor maturity of the market as well as little usability of mobile applications. These are often web applications which copy contents available on the company website and do not generate a value added.

The paper presents examples of mobile applications for broadly understood leisure services in the Polish market. According to observations, fitness (sport) applications as well as health benefits applications are rapidly developing. These applications facilitate a healthy life style rather than promote specific products or leisure services. The examples given lead to a conclusion that this area is poorly developed and there are not many solutions that can be presented as good examples. We may expect development of applications dedicated to leisure just as it was the case with applications dedicated to tourist services (guides to tourist attractions, visiting cities, museums etc).

It seems that mobile application will become common in the contemporary world within next three or four years. It is anticipated that the use of desktops will be abandoned for the sake of increasing the functionality of mobile devices. A rapid growth in the number of tablets sold in the Polish market may prove that. The examples given show a certain development direction taken by specialist mobile applications. The way mobile applications and their functionalities will develop depends on the imagination of their developers as well as on needs of users and an ability to express them.

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Zastosowanie nowoczesnych aplikacji mobilnych w uatrakcyjnianiu usług rekreacyjnych

Abstrakt

Głównym celem pracy jest przedstawienie definicji aplikacji mobilnych oraz omówienie ich różnych typów. Artykuł pokazuje aktualne trendy rynkowe w Polsce. Omawia rolę urządzenia mobilnego, takich jak smartfony i tablety oraz jego znaczenie w nowoczesnym społeczeństwie. W artykule podano przykłady niektórych aplikacji mobilnych i opisano ich funkcjonalność.

Słowa kluczowe: marketing, usługi rekreacyjne, rekreacja, aplikacje mobilne, urządzenia mobilne

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