

# From Collision to Convergence

Or how I learned to stop worrying  
and watch TV on my mobile phone.

## What this about

- Scattered thoughts on how to deliver video content on mobile connected devices (with a *slight* focus on streaming media).

## What this is not really about

- What specific *kind* of video content will find its way onto mobile phones.
- What *technology* will provide the best platform to deliver it.

## A note to stay out of trouble

- The content of this presentation reflects my personal opinions, thus the statements made here in no way represent my employer's positions and/or strategies.

**“Who in his right mind  
would ever want to watch  
TV on a mobile phone?”**

The author, circa 2001

# The author, going home, circa 2003



**What happened?**

**A bit of history...**

**timeliness**

context sensitivity

**self-expression**

**immediacy**

relevance



- People rely on their connected mobile devices to fill-in interstitial time slots, using their grey time to foster relationships and for personal entertainment.
- This has led to the concept of sushi-media: self-enclosed content morsels for quick consumption on the go.

*Many times now I've written that what's needs for Mobile TV is ... sharp video clips that can be consumed on the move quickly and easily.*

*I've likened it to sushi, as opposed to the full turkey dinner and all the trimmings.*

Russel Buckley

# Sushi content: the conveyor belt breakdown

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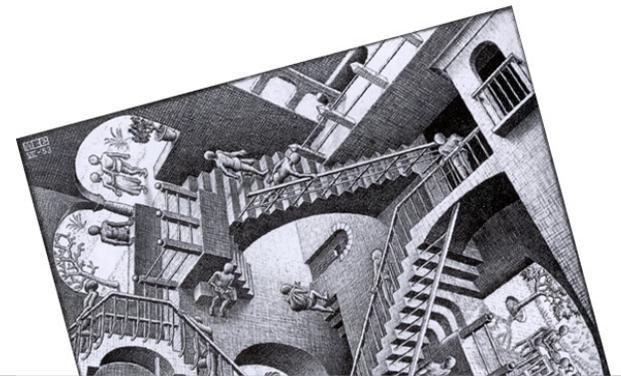
- Armed with the notion of info-snacking mobile media outlets acquired lots of content (video included) and chopped it into sushi-sized chunks.
- 3-5 minute-long videos had to be packaged for delivery.
- The *packaging* took the form of what was technically and conceptually available: mobile websites. Along came *navigation*. Lots of it.



# The navigational conundrum

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- The end result is that today most video-centric mobile products accessed via a browser-based interface exhibit a strongly unbalanced navigation-to-content ratio.
- The concept of “snacking” implies an immediate answer to a sudden need, but users currently have to work their way through the rigid hierarchical structure of a “mobile portal” to find what they want.
- The structure holding the morsels becomes the experience.



# Navigation, the web and the elusive state of flow

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- Navigation is not bad per-se, the web is arguably built upon it.
- The whole concept of *flow* arises exactly from the ability of web surfers to move effortlessly from site to site, encouraging exploration and inducing enjoyment coupled with the loss of the sense of time.
- As it is often said “the net is the experience”.

“Flow describes an online experience where the consumer is completely engaged with his or her interaction online to the extent that they often lose track of time passing and of their immediate physical surroundings.

Flow is a cognitive state that has been characterized as an optimal experience that is intrinsically enjoyable.”

Hoffman and Novak, eLab, Vanderbilt University

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# Mobile tools and continuous partial attention

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- Mobile content experiences happen in contexts that basically negate the ability to focus.
- It's difficult to navigate through menus as you're navigating through space.

“... continuous partial attention means that while you are answering your e-mail and talking to your kid, your cell phone rings and you have a conversation.

You are now involved in a continuous flow of interactions in which you can only partially concentrate on each ... we are constantly scanning the world for opportunities and we are constantly in fear of missing something better.”

Linda Stone, VP, Microsoft

# And if you thought things were complicated enough...

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- Just when the problems with short-burst video content were becoming evident, streaming media entered the picture.
- TV, or whatever other long-lasting video content you might imagine...

... on mobile phones!

**Will you get to the  
point, please?**

**Satori!**

GRANDE  
  
FRATELLO

- **Always on-ness**
  - There's always something new happening.
  - Something might happen at any time.
- **Fast in, fast out**
  - Action can be just a video call away.
  - Easy to get into the flow of what's happening.
- **Cut to measure**
  - As little or as much as you want.
- **Conversation-based**
  - You can keep hearing when you can't watch.
- **Evolving storyline**
  - Emotional attachment to what's happening.
- **Integrates with and fills-in time slots left from other media**
  - Get your fix when you're far from TV, radio, newspapers.
- **Info-flow rather than info-snack**

# Mobile devices, a different kind of flow?

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- With mobile tools flow might not have to do with *navigation*. It might have to do with *content*.
- Content structure vs. the structure that holds content.

**Collision!**

# When specs collide: screen sizes



Sony PSP  
**480 X 272**



Motorola A1000  
**320 X 208**

Creative ZEN  
**320 X 240**



# When mental models collide: telephone, PC, TV

- Is that a remote control in your pocket, or are you just happy to see me?



# When applications (should) collide: browser, media player

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- The PC paradigm strikes again.
- Why should the browser and the media player be two different applications?



“In the end there can only be one.”  
Kurgan

**Convergence!**

- People and their needs, context, medium, content (probably in this order).
- If you really like navigation go watch *Master & Commander*.
- It's not about content chunking, it's about flow and emotional attachment.
- Don't think mobile phone or PC, think remote control.

## The handset, a remote control

As much as possible make navigation resident on the device.

- Hail the rise of the mobile über-player.
  - Video-capable browsers, x(HT)ML-enabled media players, whatever's easier to develop.
- The all-powerful package should include XML-fed menus (RSS ?), constantly updated in the background with what is running and available.
  - What's on *now*, ready to click *now*.

## Content, always flowing

Quench entertainment thirst from refreshing info-streams.

- Video content could still be snack-ish ...
  - Candid camera, Music videos, TV commercials.
  - Movie trailers, Cartoons, TV series.
  - User-created content!... but linked in thematic, continuous rolling streams, 24X7.
- Video streams should proudly carry *embedded metadata*.
  - Genre, author, album...
  - URLs!

## The experience, an ON/OFF switch

Fulfillment should appear to precede need.

Immediacy of access and relevance of content are paramount.

- Using *profiled* dynamic menus users should be able to plunge into an info-stream as soon as the need arises.
- As they watch enable them to use embedded metadata to buy more stuff...er...have more fun.
  - “More of the same”, “Something different”...
  - Think Amazon TV accessed through the UI of the iPod.

## **The back-end, a personalized video-assembling machine**

- Servers should constantly poll the available content to adapt to users' taste patterns.
- Real-time collaborative filtering meets video post-production.

# Thank you!

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## Page 1

- Just as Portable Media Players are getting ready to flood the market, bit-based video streams seep into the liquid crystal displays of our mobile devices. Scattered findings from a born-again viewer playing auto-ethnographer.

## Page 3

- Where Mr. Sergio publically admits being not much of a futurologist.

## Page 4

- Stuck in traffic the author finds solace on a small screen Photo: Ashley Benigno

## Page 5

- Hint: Big Brother (be patient, keep reading). Let's rewind a bit first...

## Page 7

- Back to mobile basics:
  - Immediacy: provide quick answers to sudden needs.
  - Relevance: answer a specific user's specific needs.
  - Context sensitivity: content and functions related to users' locations and timeframes (physical and social environments).
  - Timeliness: content appropriateness, depth and accuracy (response and revision times).
  - Self-expression: speak about users' individual characteristics.

## Page 8

- Sushimedia: self-enclosed content morsels, to be quickly consumed when away from other media outlets.
- Info-snacking to fill-in interstitial time/space slots.

## Page 10

- The adoption of web-like paradigms effectively undermines all considerations around the adaptation of content. Immediacy goes the way of the Dodo bird. Image: "Relativity", M.C. Escher

## Page 12

- And there (in red) lies the catch in a mobile scenario.

## Page 16

- Enlightenment only comes from experience.

## Page 17

- Orwell meets McLuhan: welcome to Big Brother on your mobile phone, and to life with content that's true to the medium.

## Page 18

- How about turning this into a check list?

## Page 19

- Hmm, structure embedded in the content. Is there anything sacred left?

## Page 21

- In 2005 the market will be flooded with Portable Media Players...there's something to learn by checking their screen size specifications.

## Page 22

- As mobile connected devices incorporate TV-like features what existing mental models should they leverage? Which ones should they help create?

## Page 23

- Book: "The inmates are running the asylum", Alan Cooper