



WCA LBS SIG LAUNCHES WITH SPONSORSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT!

July 31st, 2007

PALO ALTO, CA — At the newly-formed Wireless Communications Alliance Location-Based Services SIG inaugural session, Qualcomm was announced as a sponsor when Clint McClellan, Qualcomm’s Senior Director of Market Intelligence presented a donation check to WCA to pledge their support for the WCA and the LBS SIG. Industry insiders recognize Qualcomm as a longtime proponent of LBS; the company has incorporated GPS technology into a broad range of chipset products, and included LBS-friendly APIs into the BREW application development environment for an end-to-end solution.



In addition to sponsorship, Cormac Conroy of Qualcomm participated in the panel discussion, “What Does LBS Mean To Me?” along with Chris Wilson, Amir Qamar, David Cole and Marcia Kadanoff. The discussion was moderated by Beth Kahn of E-Band Communications and showcased the broad interests of LBS stakeholders in Silicon Valley. One of the themes that emerged from the discussion is that location’s true value is an enabler, not necessarily an application end-point.

Marcia Kadanoff of Mobio kicked off the featured presentations with a vision for a “universal client” that transcends the browser for mobile applications. Mobio’s perspective is that location is an enabler for context, and that it becomes particularly important--within the mobile environment--for context to be consistent and available to multiple applications. As an example, Marcia portrayed a vision where the same location “tag” information is available to both friend-finder and navigation applications.



David Cole of Mapquest provided a slightly different viewpoint the notion of extending the familiar and comfortable environment presented on the browser with the “third screen” of the mobile device. In this context, the mobility of the platform demands a location-based framework to ensure relevance.

Whereas the previous speakers had been largely US and technology oriented, Amir Qamar of CIBC World Markets shared a perspective of the current status of LBS investment worldwide. Amir characterized Asian LBS with a security and monitoring focus, and thus mostly peer-to-peer, whereas the European LBS market shows strong navigation and traffic segments due to that market's overriding privacy constraints (as these "solo" applications where the location requestor = target do not typically encounter privacy restrictions). By contrast to these consumer-driven markets, North America's emerging LBS market is led by enterprises. Amir's theme was a call to action for an open, platform-based approach that addresses a broad range of technologies to enable LBS.

Cormac Conroy shared the Qualcomm perspective of how location technology can be applied to a number of consumer-facing products (e.g., cameras, PNDs, computers and of course phones). He showed a historical overview of LBS technology and identified the broad applications usage from entertainment to security applications, clearly he and Qualcomm are bullish on LBS!

Chris Wilson of Daimler Chrysler took yet another approach on LBS by noting that we Americans "explore space via our cars", making the automobile a natural host for LBS applications. He challenged the audience with a vision of LBS being applied to contextualize information delivered to passengers along a route; to consider how location, when combined with specific preferences, can enhance the driving experience and augment that "exploration of space".

Following the panelists' perspectives was an audience Q&A session that covered a broad range of LBS-related topics. While many of the questions related to the underlying technology, several attendees expressed interest in more market-related topics. Mobile advertising was clearly a topic of interest: market size, evolution (still early days), business models, content sources. Again, the theme of LBS as an enabler and contextualizer wove through many of the Q&A discussions.



Special thanks to event organizers and volunteers John Grundy, Richard Fuller, Naomi Morita and Beth Kahn without whom the session could have not taken place. Also thanks to Ying Zhang and David Weinerth of Palo Alto Research Center for hosting the event, and to David Witkowski and the Wireless Communications Alliance for their guidance and support during the SIG's initial development and launch phase.

With 60+ attendees and early support from industry stalwart Qualcomm, there is clear evidence of significant interest in LBS in Northern California!