Success Story

Shockwave

Popular game provider unveils new category of mobile games—launching the first U.S. wireless subscription game service to leverage Adobe® Flash® Lite™ technology

In the field of digital entertainment—where content and deployment are becoming increasingly codependent—Shockwave (www.shockwave.com) has offered a new value proposition.

Shockwave, the MTV Networks brand recognized as a leading destination for casual online games, has partnered with Verizon Wireless to deliver a new niche of mobile content built using Adobe Flash Lite called Shockwave Minis—small, fun, often one-button games. The mobile games, created by an international cadre of developers, are the new heart and soul of casual mobile gaming, and they represent the first set of titles that showcase the graphical richness that Adobe Flash Lite brings to mobile handsets.

Shockwave Minis are fun, easy-to-play mobile phone games, including titles from MTV, Nickelodeon, and Comedy Central. Original games, including puzzles, sports, action, and casino challenges, are constantly being added to the Shockwave Minis library. Any game can be played in about five minutes, so releasing timely new content is essential to the gaming subscription business model.

“Shockwave Minis bring a new category of fun, impulsive mobile games to the mass market,” says Roy Sehgal, VP of Strategy and New Businesses at Shockwave & AddictingGames. “Teaming with Verizon Wireless gives us the unique opportunity to jointly increase mobile game penetration in the United States.”

Cost-effective mobile development

According to Sehgal, as Macromedia® Flash from Adobe impacted rich interactivity for PC-based video and graphical content, Adobe Flash Lite software is transforming the nature of mobile content. Developing with Flash Lite greatly lowers development and deployment costs, speeds time to market, and improves the quality of mobile entertainment content on handsets.

Shockwave Minis users will immediately notice a drastic improvement in their mobile experience. “We expect Flash Lite to revolutionize mobile gaming the way Flash revolutionized online gaming,” says Sehgal. “Flash Lite games fit the mobile screen like a glove, unlike other open source software-created games that can appear awkward for the mobile screen.” With their lightweight vector graphics, Shockwave Minis have a radiant look and feel.

Porting issues lie at the economic crux of the mobile arena, claims Sehgal. Typically, the costs associated with porting a game to various handsets far outweigh the cost of creating the game itself. “The true benefit of developing with Flash Lite is that all you have to do is optimize the file for screen size and resolution—that’s it.” The cost of porting games to individual devices using Java™ or other traditional development tools has pushed the deployment costs of a single game well into hundreds of thousands of dollars. Adds Sehgal, “Now, porting efforts are virtually eliminated.”

Increasing United States mobile gaming penetration

In the field of digital entertainment—where content and deployment are becoming increasingly codependent—Shockwave (www.shockwave.com) has offered a new value proposition.

Shockwave Minis are fun, easy-to-play mobile phone games, including titles from MTV, Nickelodeon, and Comedy Central. Original games, including puzzles, sports, action, and casino challenges, are constantly being added to the Shockwave Minis library. Any game can be played in about five minutes, so releasing timely new content is essential to the gaming subscription business model.

“Shockwave Minis bring a new category of fun, impulsive mobile games to the mass market,” says Roy Sehgal, VP of Strategy and New Businesses at Shockwave & AddictingGames. “Teaming with Verizon Wireless gives us the unique opportunity to jointly increase mobile game penetration in the United States.”

Cost-effective mobile development

According to Sehgal, as Macromedia® Flash from Adobe impacted rich interactivity for PC-based video and graphical content, Adobe Flash Lite software is transforming the nature of mobile content. Developing with Flash Lite greatly lowers development and deployment costs, speeds time to market, and improves the quality of mobile entertainment content on handsets.

Shockwave Minis users will immediately notice a drastic improvement in their mobile experience. “We expect Flash Lite to revolutionize mobile gaming the way Flash revolutionized online gaming,” says Sehgal. “Flash Lite games fit the mobile screen like a glove, unlike other open source software-created games that can appear awkward for the mobile screen.” With their lightweight vector graphics, Shockwave Minis have a radiant look and feel.

Porting issues lie at the economic crux of the mobile arena, claims Sehgal. Typically, the costs associated with porting a game to various handsets far outweigh the cost of creating the game itself. “The true benefit of developing with Flash Lite is that all you have to do is optimize the file for screen size and resolution—that’s it.” The cost of porting games to individual devices using Java™ or other traditional development tools has pushed the deployment costs of a single game well into hundreds of thousands of dollars. Adds Sehgal, “Now, porting efforts are virtually eliminated.”
Shockwave Minis, are among the first titles to highlight the graphical richness that Adobe products bring to mobile handsets. Mobile content created in Flash Lite and Flash Professional gives Shockwave Minis users a drastic improvement in their mobile experience.

Shockwave Minis is initially available on the Verizon network, utilizing Qualcomm’s BREW system. Minis are currently on the LG VX 9800 (The V), the LG 8500 (chocolate), the Motorola RAZR, the Motorola KRAZR, and the Samsung A950.

“New monetization model
In addition to being the first multi-game mobile subscription service, Shockwave Minis is the first United States gaming service to take advantage of Flash Lite. Pricing strategy for the new business model was created hand-in-hand with the game development.

“Shockwave Minis aren’t just mini in screen size, they are mini experiences by design. They are a ‘snacking’ activity and we bet you can’t play just one,” says John Osvald, mobile product manager at Shockwave & AddictingGames. Verizon Wireless customers can purchase a low-cost monthly subscription for unlimited access to the game library, or can buy credit packs redeemable for individual games.

Initial adoption rates are outpacing forecasts, according to Sehgal, who adds that Shockwave Minis are positioned to help boost the 5% penetration number of consumers who download mobile games today. “Look for us to leverage the 19 million unique monthly visitors to Shockwave to drive Shockwave Minis merchandising,” he says.

Fostering a world class developer community
Shockwave has a solid history of working with many third-party developers—individuals as well as companies of all sizes—and plans to replicate its web development success in the mobile arena. The firm is keen on hearing from developers big and small with ideas for new Shockwave Minis.

Graphics for the thirty games that comprise the Shockwave Minis launch package were created by a variety of outside developers and corporate partner design teams. The Shockwave team was able to easily import existing assets, many of which were created using Adobe Photoshop CS2 and Illustrator CS2 software—ensuring a smooth workflow among teams of designers and developers worldwide.

As part of MTV Networks’ acquisition of Atom Entertainment, Shockwave is in the enviable position of working with its affiliates to leverage MTV consumer brand properties in the mobile arena—some of the biggest names in programming and content across all media platforms. For example, Shockwave Minis players might score high points in the Pimp My Ride game or help SpongeBob SquarePants escape from sticky situations. These two cobranded games are the first of many future joint content projects between the parent company and its division, according to Sehgal.

Additionally, Shockwave is partnering with CELL, a leading Japanese developer of Flash Lite content to create games exclusively for Shockwave Minis, marking CELL’s entry into the United States mobile content market. CELL contributed five titles to the initial Shockwave Minis game library.

With continuous infusion of new content into the Shockwave Minis lineup, Sehgal expects to enjoy a longer than average product lifecycle for the mobile games. “Since we began this project, we believe we’ve offered a great value and a superior mobile gaming experience to the mobile user. Shockwave Minis is a step toward a new mobile model that will work for everybody.”