There is, as always, a lot happening in the Mobile world.

The market is changing rapidly and is unpredictable - 12 months ago expectations were high for the launch of Nokia's Ovi store…

This update guides you through some key areas.

It should help to show you how Mobile can be integrated into your business and/or media plans.

We can provide the development solutions, and the answers to any questions.

Mobile is all devices, not just smartphones.

SMS

The best way to reach 100% of your target market is with SMS - A near 100% open rate, and compatibility across all networks and handsets, **but its not very sexy.**

SMS alternatives

Websites

- **Mobile optimised websites** will be a better entry point than apps as they service more users and can supply information on your (mobile) userbase.

Apps

- **Think of Apps as other digital assets with a distinct purpose,** to engage or drive traffic to a specific destination (like microsites).
- Apps exist because poor internet connectivity hinders the mobile browser experience (3G is still not very good).
- Apps allow more of the information the user wants to 'play' with to be held on the device so less data to be transferred over mobile internet – giving a nicer user experience.
- Check your target demographic to see what handsets they are using and how many of them you're going to reach.
- **Apps are not just for phones -** iPad also takes apps, but does not make phone calls.
- You will start to see more Apps on TVs and as more and more devices incorporate a LCD display there will be room for innovative Apps on them.

So, what makes a great App?

- **Utilises the phone's features** - GPS, Camera, Compass, Microphone, speaker, accelerometer - and offer a cleaner, nicer interface than a mobile browser.
- **Single function expertise -** Apple likes apps that perform one function well. eg. Sky+ app

See our Top of the Apps listing:
http://www.putitout.co.uk/news.php?sid=13

And now for the technical bit - Convergence

Convergence enables Apps to be integrated across different operating systems.

A few companies are already opening up the creation of Apps through development environments which enable coding using standard web techniques (HTML, CSS, Javascript).

The Apps are then submitted to a compiler that will kick out Apps for multiple Operating Systems.

This should open up the market somewhat.

Taking Apps even further …

Apps are a growth area – they've been around for a long time on all computer devices you have ever used, but known simply as computer programmes.

The wonderful marketing machine of Apple has allowed a new market to grow whereby people are happy to buy these small pieces of software for small amounts of money by rebranding them as Apps.

Once you understand that Apps are discreet software programmes you realise that the sky's the limit with what they can do and what devices they can be put on.

For a more top level view on the app market from the economist last month **see the image below**

Useful links

This link guides you through some of the current thinking to help with putting "mobile" into a brief. "Starbucks App" http://unhub.com/IrTK

GetJar is a good site to keep up to speed with the UK market makeup of handsets
http://unhub.com/8Cfr

The below link is Apple's User Interface Guidelines as they stood on 25th June 2010 [.pdf link]
http://www.putitout.co.uk/files/100625iPhone_user_interface_guidelines.pdf

Growth in mobile applications

Apps and downs

On their own, mobile applications may not become big moneyspinners

SOME fight wars with words, others with numbers. Hardly a day passes without new data on mobile apps, the small applications that can be downloaded to smartphones to perform all kinds of feats, such as accessing social networks, playing games and identifying unknown music. Apple recently announced that its App Store now offers 225,000 apps, which collectively have been downloaded 5 billion times. Android Market, the storefront for the operating system that powers many other smart-phones, now boasts 60,000 apps and is catching up fast. And GetJar, an independent mobile store that offers programs for all kinds of handsets, claims 72,000 apps and 1 billion downloads.

As this is all part of the ongoing "platform war" between different mobile operating systems, the numbers should be taken with several grains of salt. The more the numbers are puffed up, not least with some double-counting, the more users and developers the respective app stores hope to attract. Ilja Laurs, GetJar's chief executive, admits that his tally includes different versions of the same software—because this is industry practice. What is more, many apps are the mobile equivalent of marketing: they are given away to tout other wares. On June 15th Apple even released an app that lets users order the latest version of its own iPhone. Others apps are labours of love that have been put out free by passionate developers.

Nevertheless, research firms are trying to measure the market with tried and tested methods, sensing there are lucrative reports and consulting services to sell. In a recent study Juniper Research put last year's revenues from mobile apps at nearly $10 billion and estimated that it will more than treble by 2015. Yet such figures are educated guesses at best, argues an analyst with a rival market-research firm which has refrained from making predictions of its own because of the paucity of data.

This makes it extremely difficult to gauge how good a business mobile apps really are. Developers of the programs get to keep a large part of what users pay to download one—70% in most cases. Apple says that it has already passed on more than $1 billion in revenues (meaning that its App Store, launched in July 2008, has so far generated $1.4 billion in revenues). Some developers are certainly making a killing. But success is often a matter of luck and much depends on how an app is promoted by the mobile store.

Despite the lack of hard data, at least the dynamics of the app economy are becoming clearer. And they seem to be more like the music business than the software one. On average, it takes about the same time to write an app as it does to compose a song, says GetJar's Mr Laurs. Both cost about the same to download, $1.90 on average. In each case, some make it big but most never become hits. And apart from evergreens, such as games, utilities and programs to use Facebook and Twitter, even the most successful mobile apps often quickly fade into obscurity.

In much the same way as recorded music is increasingly considered a loss leader for other products, paid-for apps are likely to become an ever smaller piece of the pie. More apps are likely to be given away to get users to pay for premium services or "virtual goods", like weapons or clothes in online games. And ads are about to become more important as a source of revenue. On July 1st Apple will launch its new advertisement platform, which allows the placement of ads directly within apps.

This does not mean apps are mere eye candy on small screens. In fact, they are bound to become more widespread. Newspapers and record labels have started to wrap their content in apps that come with additional features, hoping that it will allow them to charge for more things. And as other electronic devices—television sets, alarm clocks, e-readers and even electricity meters—become smarter and more connected, consumers will be able to download apps for these too. Perhaps, in the end, everything will have an app. ■

Political advertising in America

Buying votes

Nobody loves a tight political race as much as a media firm

MEG WHITMAN, who used to run eBay and now wants to run California, talks a lot about strengthening business. She is already propping up the media industry. Ms Whitman spent more than $80m, mostly on television advertising, to win the Republican nomination for governor on June 8th. Hardly had the confetti from the celebrations settled when she returned to the airwaves to promote her candidacy for November's election.

The price of democracy in America has risen in recent years. Kantar Media, which tracks political advertising, reckons $2.6 billion was spent on the 2008 general election—up from $1.7 billion four years earlier. It thinks slightly more could be spent in