China Developers Bring Mobile Widgets to Market

A new league of widgets storm the market with QQ Weather (Tencent), NBA News (KongZhong), Fun Guide (Magus Soft) and Sohu Stocks (Sohu).

The June 2008 release in China of the Nokia N78 device — a fully featured multimedia computer with wireless capabilities — is set to drive widget usage on mobile devices to new heights. For a country that is beginning to take off on the mobile information superhighway, the Nokia N78 device with 3.5G and WLAN will allow consumers to stay connected at home or in public hot spots. This is an exciting time of new beginnings for China and for the mobile service-oriented architecture paradigm.

This trend is not lost on Chinese developers, who have been steadily gaining momentum in widget development. Though the current widget market is robust, the industry is poised to grow further as the 2008 Beijing Olympics ushers in a host of widget opportunities. Widgets from leading Chinese developers — Tencent Technology (Shenzhen) Company Limited, KongZhong Corporation, Magus Soft (Beijing) Ltd., and Sohu.com — are preloaded on the Nokia N78 device, delivering updated information directly to mobile users via a rich user interface. As mobile widget development gains ground in China, consumers can expect to see more exciting developments in the near future.

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> *—Vigo Zhang, Business Development Manager, Tencent*

Mobile widgets bring new opportunities for Chinese developers

Widgets are applications that consume and deliver information from the Internet. With mobile widgets, consumers do not have to rely solely on stand-alone applications that have a limited life span, nor do they have to bookmark WAP sites. Instead, they can take the middle road, taking advantage of full-featured applications that offer frequently updated information, such as stock market news, sports results, and local weather reports.

Initially used exclusively on the desktop, widgets are now becoming popular on mobile devices, thanks to the availability of Web Run-Time (WRT) on the S60 platform — the first platform to support mobile widgets.

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These simple, small applications can now be created for mobile devices using familiar standards-based Web technologies, such as XHTML, CSS, Asynchronous JavaScript™ and XML (Ajax).

Tencent Technology

Tencent Technology is a leading provider of Internet services and one of the first developers of instant messaging (IM) software in China. Adapting its popular QQ IM software into a mobile widget, Tencent created Mobile QQ, allowing millions of Chinese consumers to chat on the go. Since then, the company has modified the widget to provide local weather news in various places in China.

"Our QQ weather widget is preloaded in Nokia devices, thus strengthening Tencent's branding and reach to a vast number of mobile users. The widget provides two days of weather forecast information for mobile users. We also provide lifestyle advice — what to wear, the UV index, and air quality," says Vigo Zhang, business development manager of Tencent. "This is our first mobile widget based on the S60 platform, and we created it with the support from Forum Nokia."

Vigo Zhang, tencent

KongZhong

KongZhong offers mobile users NBA News, a widget that accesses news on current sports events. The company recently updated the widget to meet the increasing appetite for sports-related news. In time for the upcoming Olympics, KongZhong secured the exclusive rights to distribute news from the National Basketball Association (NBA) in the U.S. "The market in China is changing. Our customers are becoming more discerning, and KongZhong is adapting," says Ai Bo, manager of KongZhong. "With the need for better quality services and more abundant products, we are looking into innovative business models and extensive channels to cater to this. NBA News now provides current and timely NBA news, pictures, and player data news for our widget users."

Ai Bo, KongZhong

> *"In the last three years, we have received extensive support from Forum Nokia in training and resources, which has been essential in developing our NBA widget."*
> *—Ai Bo, Manager, KongZhong*

Magus Soft

Providing information of another sort is Magus Soft, whose products include entertainment and lifestyle news and services, as well as multiuser online WAP communities. "We are seeing a need for more convenient services for busy Chinese users," says Online Production Manager Wang Bin. "Our widget aims to make it handy, convenient, and easy for the user to find out lifestyle information on the go. Our challenge in doing so is how to keep the interface easy to read, yet complete with all the information a user might need." Consumers can now look forward to seeing the Magus Soft Fun Guide widget on mobile devices equipped with Nokia Content Discoverer (NCD) in China.

Sohu

Sohu Stocks, available from Sohu — originally an online search engine — aims to provide timely stock market information in China. Consumers can customize it to reflect the stocks they currently own and to check on the latest stock market movements. "To create a successful widget, ease of use and user interface design [are] of utmost importance," says Technical Director Lin Yun Peng. "While we can build on our strengths as an online content provider, mobile widgets development was a different ballgame. With technical help from Forum Nokia, our widget was completed. Sohu Stock came in first in the Nokia widget development competition." With a portfolio of brands including Sogou, ChinaRen, 17173.com, Focus.cn, Goodfeel, and Go2Map, Sohu built its mobile widget to capitalize on its strong online presence and content.

Wang Bin, Magus Soft

Forum Nokia is valued resource for Chinese widget developers

The developers agree that Forum Nokia tools and resources were important in creating their widgets. Providing a host of tools, support mechanisms, and even S60 prototype devices, Forum Nokia became a one-stop shop for these developers to build their widgets from start to finish, and provided useful advice when it came to optimizing their widgets for the N78 device. "We work closely with Nokia on NCD hosting, application development, and application preloading. This is very helpful for us in developing our widget," says Wang Bin.

The wide reach of Nokia communications devices is another key benefit for developers. According to Vigo Zhang, the fact his company's QQ weather widget is preloaded in Nokia devices strengthens "Tencent's brand name and

Lin Yun Peng, Sohu

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reach to a vast number of mobile users." Echoing this sentiment is Ai Bo, who says, "Forum Nokia provides channels of distribution for KongZhong's NBA News widget, as well as the opportunity of including it in their new range of mobile devices. We are looking forward to [offering] our widget on a Nokia handset, which [will be] a good way for us to reach out to the NBA fan base."

Developers also get to showcase their widgets at Nokia events. According to Wang Bin, "Forum Nokia events allow Magus Soft to exhibit our widgets to users, and this has been pivotal in showcasing the usability of our widget."

With the extensive help and support the developers receive from Forum Nokia, they have come to view Forum Nokia as an important part of their success. "Sohu have been with Forum Nokia for more than three years, and our membership with Forum Nokia is a win-win relationship," said Lin Yun Peng. Ai Bo adds, "In the last three years, we have received extensive support from Forum Nokia in terms of training and resources, which has been essential in developing our NBA widget."

Looking ahead

With China poised to become an increasingly mobile society, the developers are gearing up to focus even more on mobile widget development. "We are looking to develop many more of our successful Internet products into mobile widgets," says Vigo Zhang. Wang Bin feels the same way: "Widgets will provide end-user services in an easier and more convenient way. Magus Soft will definitely be looking into developing more widgets and providing more services in the future with Forum Nokia's support."

This is a step the developers can take confidently with support from the thriving ecosystem of developers and experts in Forum Nokia.
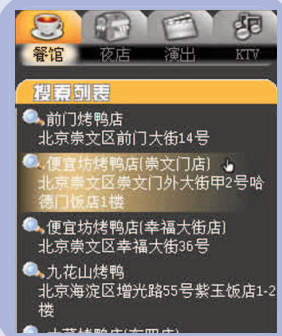
For more information, go to:

www.nokia.com/developer

Stay dry with weather updates from Mobile QQ Weather widget.

Slam Dunk!: Kong Zhong serves up the latest NBA news.

Be in the know with Magus Soft Fun Guide lifestyle and entertainment news widget.

Sohu Stocks gives users the latest and most up to date market action.

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