Recognising Innovations in Telecom & Mobile Content & Application for Masses

mBillionth

AWARD SOUTH ASIA 2011

mBillionth Award South Asia 2011

The Background

21st century world would be a cellular age going by the phenomenal increase in cell phones worldwide.

The cellular age is fast accelerating with cell phones magnifying our larger identity in both individual and collective domains and in various social, cultural, economic contexts. This tremendous growth of mobile penetrations is a scene to be witnessed worldwide especially in developing countries with larger population concentration. Thus, the power of cellular technology is evident, the South Asia must take full advantage of this phenomenon.

From humble SMS and basic voice to smartphones and enterprise workflow, mobile is the choice for new content and services. Mobiles are not just convenient and fashionable but liberating and empowering for hundreds of millions of South Asians previously locked out of the digital movement.

The ubiquitous cell phones/mobiles are handy gadgets that can now do anything from allowing physicians to review patient records on-the-go, to alerting drivers in any city of nearby parking spaces while looking for a spot, in addition to the texting, surfing and calling on many of today's phones.

From cricket news and music ringtones to agricultural price information and tsunami alerts, mobiles have become the "first screen" of choice for millions of South Asians. The mobile phone is improving the marketing reach of consumer brands – while also providing vital connectivity to "bottom of the pyramid" users in remote parts of South Asia.

The mobile revolution has triumphed in South Asia, and now needs regular industry-driven peer-acknowledged awards to highlight the best successes and point the way towards even more benefits.

The mBillion[th] Award acknowledges South Asia as a key hub of the world's mobile & telecom market in terms of penetration and innovation, and promotes the best of mobile-based implementations in the region.

Why mBillion[th] Award?

South Asia is one of the world's largest and fastest growing mobile markets – but still suffers from a significant digital divide. Mobile phones are surpassing all other media in terms of penetration in the region: TV, radio, Internet, newspapers, magazines and landlines. Mobile platforms are becoming the natural choice for extending essential and innovative digital services to the broadest section of the population.

In 2014, India's population is expected to be 1.26 billion, with mobile penetration of 1.01 billion the mobile teledensity would be 80% above. It would mean 8 out of every 10 Indians will have access to a mobile device.

India is the world's fastest growing Wireless market with 752 Million mobile phone subscribers as of February, 2011. Other countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in South Asia also showing great results as mobile users. The population percentage coverage of mobiles in the region is such – India with 46.37, Bangladesh with 31.11 , Sri Lanka 51 and Pakistan 59 (as in 2010) and the trend is moving upward each day.

South Asia is bearing witness to the power of the mobile device to empower millions with information, content and services. The power of mobile in meeting knowledge, social and economic deficits is a challenge in these countries. On the contrary, the power of mobile innovations and applications in content and services delivery is amazing and exponentially on the rise. It is time that we in South Asia, the nations and governments in the region, as well as service providers, give a thrust on mobile for delivering meaningful services, especially that could empower and enable efficient day-to-day life for the larger masses.

It is imperative now that a situation be created where we have the best of applications, contents, and services accumulated as examples to drive the government and industry to ensure they create meaningful opportunities in last mile mobile content and services. Governance and development is bound to be better with this.

Towards this objective, in order to make the content and services deliverable through mobile as a medium and means, Digital Empowerment Foundation formally launched the mBillion[th] Award South Asia in the year 2010.

What is the mBillionth Award South Asia?

mBillionth Award is a dedicated platform to explore the latent potential of mobile & telecom sector across 8 countries in South Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The mBillionth Award is designed as an annual South Asia's leading mobile & telecom award platform leading to larger regional Mobile Congress in media and policy advocacy. It is to honour excellence in mobile communications across South Asia spread over 11 core categories:

- m-Business & Commerce/Banking
- m-Culture & Heritage
- m-Governance
- m-Education & Learning
- m-Entertainment
- m- Environment
- m-Health
- m-Inclusion
- m-Infrastructure
- m-News & Journalism
- m-Travel & Tourism

The mBillionth Award South Asia 2010 was the first-of-its-kind in the region recognising and felicitating mobile innovations, applications and content services delivery.

The mBillionth Award Objectives

1. Recognise innovations and creativity in mobile & telecom solutions

2. Provide a platform for the innovations for benchmarking in the mobile industry

3. Provide a wider forum for strategic networking, alliances and partnership building

4. Provide a South Asia Congress to exchange ideas, practices and policy strengths & mobile advocacy

5. Facilitate in building a South Asia network towards campaign and advocacy in mobile for mass empowerment and inclusive growth.

The mBillionth Award Process

The mBillionth Award brings together the best mobile & telecom experts in South Asia as jurors, to deliberate and decide on the award-winning mobile applications and entrepreneurs in the region.

The nomination and jury process is transparent and fair, and has drawn support from leading corporate and government players in the region.

The Jury Process

Each Award Category will be judged by a Panel of Jury. The jury is comprised of eminent personalities from the private and public sector, industries and the academia, and is selected based on their knowledge and expertise. The Jury Process consists of:

- The process commences from the date of closing of nominations.
- The criteria set out for the Awards program is the general jury criteria that has been set by the m Billionth Award committee.
- The Jurors Panel of the respective Award Categories may modify the judging criteria to suit the respective Category in consultation with the Judging Chairman of the Awards.
- The Panels, in consultation with the award Chairman may transfer any nomination received to another Category, to ensure "best fit".
- The initial judging is through online review of the nominations by the Jury Panel.
- The decision of the Jury will be final and binding.
- The Jurors panel reserves the right not to give an Award for a Category, if the nomination does not meet the standard.
- The final results will be announced during the Award Gala.
- All materials received during the judging process shall remain confidential

Juror's Evaluation Criteria

- **Content:** Quantify matching quality of content and services delivery, relevance of content and its utility value
- **Interface**: Usability, user friendly, easy surfing features, interactive nature
- **Technical Speciality:** Innovative design with unique features of applications having user appealing features
- **Design:** Design of applications and devises having larger user preference, aesthetic value with multimedia and other features with audio-visuals, graphics
- **Accessibility**: Cost effectiveness matching social and economic capital of different user groups with diverse needs in different income brackets.

Expected Reach & Impact of mBillion^th Award

It is a well known fact that mobile phones are more affordable than computers, require less infrastructure, do not require the user to have much technological knowledge or even to be able to read and write, and are easy to carry from place to place.

These devices lend themselves to flexible usage (text, voice and two-way communication), do not require special training, and the costs of connectivity are relatively low. Due to the low cost of labour, mobile phones in developing countries are much cheaper and easier to repair than computers.

In the view of above scenario there are hundreds of mobile based technologies coming every day and there is no platform where such applications, gadgets, service delivery can get recognized.

Realizing the need of creating a benchmark in best innovations of mobile applications, service delivery and mobile instrument, mBillion^th Award has made leapfrog in recognizing and promoting mobile technologies for efficient governance, rural development and betterment of masses.

Currently, there is a huge lack of efforts similar to this- even though mobile & telecom market is already considered to be a mature market but the desired beneficial impact has not been leveraged out of this in enabling larger mass based services with meaningful deliverables.

With initiatives like the Mobile Congress, which happens as a part of mBillion^th Award South Asia Gala, this model is providing multiple windows of solutions under one roof with synergetic efforts, ideas, and approaches: Award & Congress with purpose.