

Mobile Networking for Mobile Marketing (mNet-4-mMk)

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ABSTRACT

Mobile Networking (mNet) is linked to **Mobile Marketing (mMk)** activities through a new technology - **Web 2.0** . **mNet** uses online resources and techniques such as: social networks, professional business networks, virtual communities, affiliate partnerships, newsletters/RSS, blogging, *twittering*, chat and messenger, e-groups and more...

mN builds relations, develops new ideas and creates opportunities based on BUILD-SHARE-CONTRIBUTE concept, sharing and accessing data-information-knowledge, ideas-innovation-inventions, good-or-bad practices, communication-collaboration-comfort. As a *low cost marketing* form, **mN** takes 95% commitment and time, 5% money.

We have designed **Mobile Networking** in 4 levels:

- *junk networking (JN)*,
- *passive networking (PN)*,
- *multilevel networking (MLN)*,
- *empathy networking (EN)*.

They are based on the strategies and techniques used today and the overall vision of the **MobiNet** - *mobile networker*.

Mobile Networking uses *mobile profiles* on multiple and versatile networks creating the unique and personal mobile professional, technical, academic composite image, which is *the virtual identity card (vIC)*

1. Introduction to Mobile Networking concept

Networks are structures formed by **interconnected nodes**.

The nodes can be individuals, companies or groups while the connections can be based on friendship, business, interests, location, age, education, goals etc

Networks gain a new perspective by the development of **mobile networks**, introducing Internet platforms in order to let people to **build - share – communicate – contribute** in a better and efficient way.

Using the mobile networks the **MobiNet** (mobile networker) can access data and information; transform information into knowledge; share the knowledge-experience-ideas easier and more quickly.

Overall, mobile networks boost collaboration and innovation, making people more competitive.

Today, the most popular online networks are: Facebook, Hi5, Twitter, Myspace, Badoo, Bebo, Blogster, Friendster, Google Buzz, LinkedIn, Delicious, My Journal, Netlog, Research Gate, TalkBizNow, StumbleUpon, Tagged, Xing etc.

Different sites are presenting the lists and remarks concerning the social networking sites, for example: <http://qualitypoint.blogspot.com/2010/05/list-of-social-networking-sites.html>.

The mobile networks are very dynamic, and new types of networks are added every day. Platforms like *Ning* were built to let every Internet user to create his own online network without any programming knowledge.

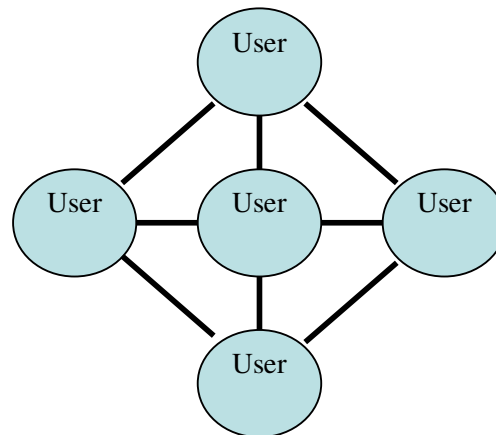
2. The Mobile Networks' major categories

Networks can be separated in a few major categories:

- **social** networks,
- **professional business** networks,
- **virtual communities**,
- others: such as: **newsletters/RSS, blogs, twittering, e-groups** etc

Social networks are used mainly by individuals in order to make online friends and partners, talk about hobbies, common interests etc. Examples of platforms from this category include: *FaceBook, HI5, My Space*. The communication can be initiated from any user to any user.

Figure 1 – Communication system in social networks



Professional business networks are used:

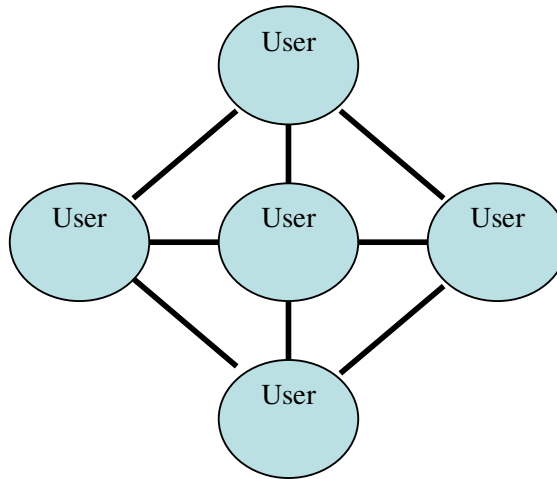
(1) by individuals in order to get connections to potential employers, to ask for online references from former employees, teachers etc.

(2) by companies in order to get contacts, maintain relations with clients, partners, suppliers, distributors, financiers.

The most popular professional business network is *LinkedIn*.

The communication system is very similar to the one developed for social networks.

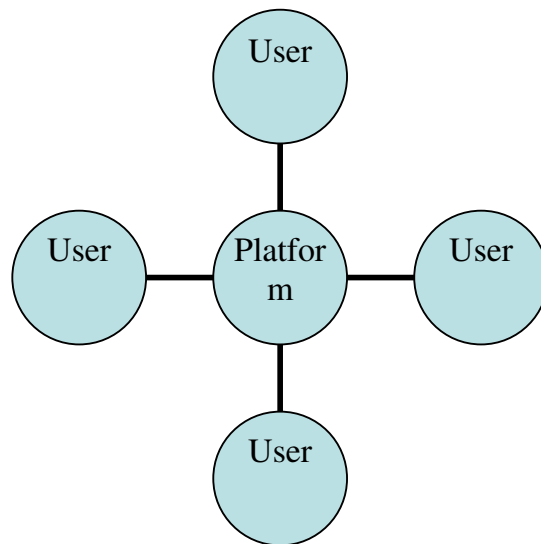
Figure 2 – Communication system in professional business networks



Virtual communities are collaborative platforms used both by individuals and by companies mostly to share information and experiences.

These are less centered around the user profiles and more on discussing common topics, sharing experiences, good or bad practices, etc. Communication can be from any user to any other user but relationships can not be formed.

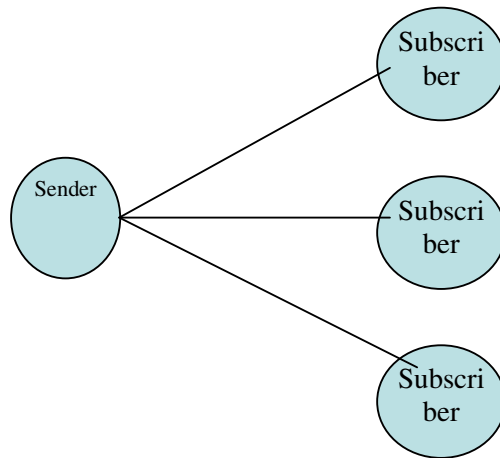
Figure 3 – Communication system in professional business networks



Newsletters are used in order to send information to a group of people or a group of companies. The difference between a social network, a business platform and a newsletter list is that in the last one the communication is one way.

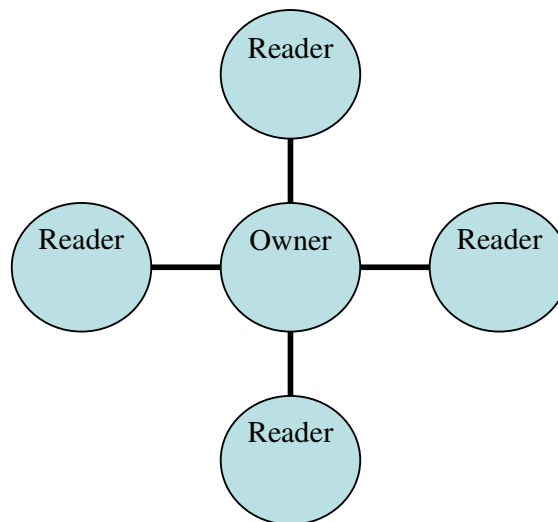
The newsletter sender can disseminate information to all subscribers; can receive information from them but they can not communicate between themselves.

Figure 4– Communication system in newsletters



Blogs as a networking technique can be used by individuals but also by companies. An individual can create a blog to share his ideas, creations, concerns, proposals meanwhile a company will create a blog to humanize the relationship with the clients and to strengthen the consumers' loyalty, to create a positive community around it's products/services, to create discussions about products/services offered and get the clients' point of view, to develop discussions about strong or weak points of the company/products/services, to generate awareness around the products/services offered.

Figure 5– Communication system in blogs



Blogs facilitate the communication between its owner and participants, from participants to participants (with the owners permission) but can not create relationships between participants like the social or business networks.

Twittering is a special form of communication similar to SMS - *Short Message Service* or MMS-*Multimedia Messaging Service*. The online platform www.twitter.com, allows registered users to post short messages on their profile page. The message will be immediately seen on the profile page of each subscriber to that user.

In this case the communication is only from owner to participant. Subscribers to the same user can not communicate between themselves.

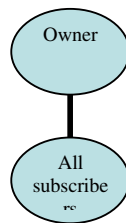
Subscribers can not directly reply to a message posted But *Twitter* gives the possibility to send messages to the owner.

A particularity is that you can not add people as “friends” or connections like on social networks (ex. *FaceBook*).

If the communication is only from the owner towards the participant the connection is only from the participant towards the owner.

This feature prevents spamming in the form of adding a large number of unknown people and then sending them unsolicited messages about the companies’ products.

Figure 6– Communication system in Twitter

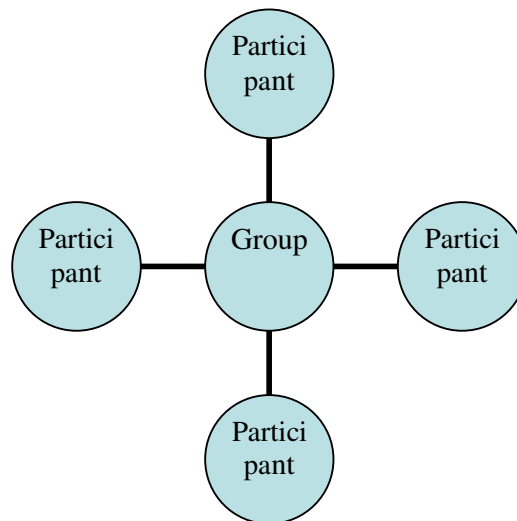


E-Groups allow people with common interests to communicate between themselves easily, without sending the information separately to each person, to share files-photos-calendars.

The most popular e-group platforms are the ones created by *Google* and by *Yahoo*.

The communication can be from any participant to the entire group but not from one participant to another participant separately.

Figure 7– Communication system in e-groups



The connection to an e-group is both ways: a user can request to join the group and a group owner can send an invitation to a user.

In order to prevent spam a group owner can only invite a limited number of users per day. *Google* Groups has also a feature to "report as spam" a group that sends unsolicited invitations.

On the other hand an Internet user can also subscribe to different groups in order to be able to send spam messages to the group members or copy the list of members and add them to spam email lists. *Google* Groups has solved this issue by allowing a group owner to block access to the group to a specific user/e-mail address.

The above network types can be used in creating a mobile marketing strategy. The platforms are free to join; the costs involved are **time, commitment** and possibly the **personnel** to maintain the online relations.

3. Mobile Networking strategies

Networking is a **slow** marketing strategy. The results are not immediate. We consider the mobile networking strategies in 4 types:

(1) *Junk Networking (JN)*. This strategy involves the following steps:

- Creating a list of online networks.
- Accessing each network and creating a profile for the company.
- Adding a large number of friends/contact to the profile (random unknown people).
- Sending them messages about the company/products/services offered.

This networking style can seem the easiest but it is not effective. Users can be bothered by being added in mass and by receiving promotional messages. It is similar to *spam*.

Although it is not illegal but could create an opposite effect. Until now the major online networking platforms have not implemented any protection against these techniques.

Another disadvantage of this strategy is that the users added to receive the promotional message may have no real interest in the product.

(2) *Passive Networking (PN)*. This networking strategy is based on the following steps:

- Selecting a list of networks.
- Creating a profile on each of them.
- Updating the profile (periodically)
- Waiting for users to be interested and adding the promoter as a contact/friend.

In this case the communication with other users can not be considered *spam*.

The results are coming very slow.

(3) *Multilevel Networking (MLN)*. Is based on the following steps:

- Creating a list o networks.
- Accessing each network and realising a company profile.
- Adding the other company employees, collaborators as contacts.
- Searching and adding the company suppliers, clients as contacts.
- Updating periodically the information on the profile.
- Waiting for the friends/contacts of employees, partners, suppliers, clients to find and be interested in the profile

It is also a slow effects' strategy, but it is very good for maintaining the communication with the partners, clients that the companies already gained.

(4) *Empathy Networking (EN)*. This can be formulated as" thinking like the client".

The steps for implementing this strategy are:

- Selecting a list of networks.

- Analyzing each network and creating a user profile (why do users access that network, what kind of users, age segmentation, education, are they interested in the products sold by the company or not etc).
- Adapting the company profile to each network in order to better fit the users.
- Opening discussions with users concerning similar products.

A lot of companies use the first and/or the second strategy because they are the most effective.

4. Transylvania Business Centre designer of innovative and competitive networks – Study Case

Since 1992, Centrul de Afaceri Transilvania Business Center (CAT) from Cluj-Napoca (www.ClujNapoca.ro) has developed a large *network of networks*. The first networks were designed and developed in the physic reality. After 1995 the Internet facilities gave a new dimension to CAT's information and communication activities.

Pioneer and designer in applications, dissemination and implementation of **ICT – Information Communication Technologies**, CAT moved its networks into the virtual space. Since 1997 we could be observed how the hybrid joint networks were transformed into virtual networks and the new *eTools* were innovated and developed: www.e-CAT.ro, www.e-Bursa.ro, www.v-Market.ro.

Our concept was called: **n2n** (*net-to-net* or *network-to-network*) established a new behaviour in the mobile business (**mBIZ**) activities. We have defined this new behaviour: **Networking-the-Networks**.

n2n concept was designed, tested, validated and implemented for the first time in CAT's projects during the last years of the XXth Century.

The new millennium consecrated our research and the results were included into the EU projects for PHARE, FP5, FP6, Structural Funds' projects implemented by CAT.

The projects acronyms were: *Energia, ViVa, Liric, EWEN, Tex-Map, BRE, IRC-Innovation Relay Center, smE-MPOWER, ABILITIES, ERMA, deployPROMIS* and more.

NETWORKING is an essential element for the *mobile Knowledge Management (mKM)* and *mobile Marketing* performances and for the expansion of mobile business (**mBIZ**).

In the first decade of the XXIst Century, Transilvania Business Center's activities were concentrated on the mobile networks' technologies for new innovations in *mobile marketing (mKM)* and new developments in *mobile business (mBIZ)*. We were working on the *eTOOLS* which give to the mobile businessman (mBOSS) a **total mobility (TM)** in fulfilling the tasks and objectives.

The **n2n** concept's add value is remarked during the implement'ation of the most efficient **iNET** (*intelligent/internet/innovative network*). The key elements are:

- ❑ Knowledge - Innovation - Competitiveness
- ❑ Mobility - Flexibility - Visibility - Accessibility
- ❑ Efficiency - Transparency - Security
- ❑ Easy-to-Network, Friendly Networkers / Networks
- ❑ Attractive - Comfortable - Enjoyable
- ❑ BIZtainment - RESEARCHtainment - EDUtainment - CULTainment

The virtual networks developed by CAT since 1995 are following the 6 basic qualities considered by the designers of n2n concept:

- ❑ Delocalization
- ❑ Dematerialization
- ❑ Decentralization
- ❑ Debureaucratization
- ❑ Miniaturization (Nanotechnologies-Artificial Intelligence)
- ❑ Comfort and Life Quality (**mLS**- mobile Lyfe Style)

Mobile Networking for Mobile Marketing (mNet-4-mMk) is a new approach under testing, using CAT's second virtual platform consecrated to the **netG-net** generation (ex. students, masterends, doctorants, young researchers and more).

This project is trying to gather all the networking tools presented in this paper for developing new competences and abilities within the **netG**.

The on line process of training&coaching give new challenges to the young students, new opportunities to find the new mobile jobs: flexible workers and freelancers.

The transferee of knowledge, good practices and ideas stimulate students' intelligence and talents for a new economy and a comfortable **mobile life style**.

The first CAT's network for students was designed in 1995. The last development is under implementation within the Training and Coaching Center for Students (Centrul de Practica Studenteasca).

The network is connecting the students as individuals and the students' groups with the on line training and coaching tasks and activities in the field of mMk-mobile Marketing and mBIZ-mobile business.



Fig. 8 Training and Coaching Centers portal www.v-market.ro/practica

Another important networking project where CAT contributed was **IRC – Innovation Relay Center**.

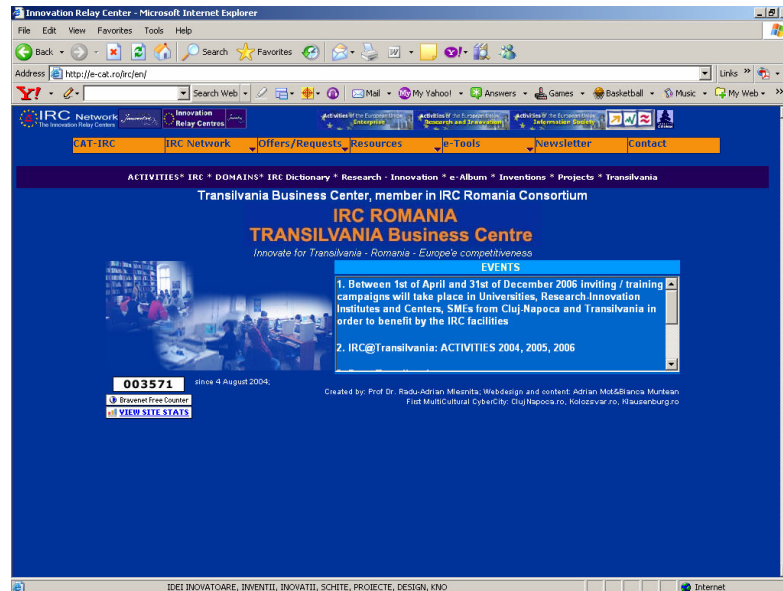


Figure 9– IRC Innovation Relay Center portal for Transilvania www.e-CAT.ro/irc

IRC network was created by European Commission and linked the most important European actors in the field of research, innovation and technology's brokerage. More about the functioning and organization of the network are available at www.e-cat.ro/irc-new.ppt

5. Final conclusion

When selecting a networking strategy and implementing it, it would be important to keep in mind that on the Internet everything is into a global interaction.

All profiles and data about a company, product, service, employee is accessible to all Internet users.

With a simple search we can find 10-15 profiles of the companies or products, using the *Google* or similar search engine.

We can also find the *forums*, *forum discussions* or *bloging* about companies and products, valuable information about their markets and marketing strategies.

If a product is low quality or the staff is rude it is enough for one client to signal it on a forum/blog/community/group/network and the entire Internet community will know about it.

But, at the same time, if a product is really good or the services are high quality and they are offered at good prices everyone can easily be recommend to users/consumers and can be found by all others on Internet.

The Internet is a global network working for us or against us.

An important feature considered by us is that in **mNet - mobile Networking** the communication can not be one way.

The companies can not simply promote their products/services to the Internet users, because the communication is both ways; the users can also provide information, experiences and knowledge, the consumers can recommend or not the products and services, free and without any restrictions.

The eTools are: the profile statuses, the blog posts, the forum posts, the community discussions etc.

The information can not be controlled nor deleted by a company, making the accessibility and transparency the most important elements of a new free, global and democratic marketing strategy.

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