**Digital Innovation Studio**

**Moving into Mobile lab**

**Running June 2010 – October 2010**

**Summary of weekly research calls**

Participating organizations:

The Uptake, Ms. Magazine, Yes! Magazine, American Independent News Network, Alternet

**First call – June 18th, 2010**

**Jed Alpert, Mobile Active**

\*notes for this have been corrupted

Jed Alpert presented on Mobile Active, a tool first introduced to members at the TMC member meeting on their mobile sms platform. He spoke about the importance and value of the data obtained from running sms campaigns and the ability to build and mobilize community. Used the example of the immigration march being organized in 1-2 weeks? – organizing house parties for a conference call that then turned into a rally on the National Mall.

**Second call – June 25th, 2010**

**Josh Koppel, Scrollmotion**

Scrollmotion is a tool that builds mobile applications for print publications. They were some of the first to bring print publications to mobile development. Unfortunately, they came to the table unprepared and not listening and spent a lot of time pitching the idea of building a collective app for all TMC members.

He honed in on the importance of branding and content development – packaging for easy distribution. Mobile applications have the ability to accurate track metrics and record and store data obtained from the user. Analyzing this info helps to better package content to your users. Some models advertise additional content within the app for subscribers.

He identifies trends in the field that free apps were more frequently downloaded and allowed subscription within the app. He emphasizes the value of the increased user engagement with mobile. Jason Barnett’s takeaway was interest in the tool. He liked the integration of reporters crowdsourcing information through the app, it “gives someone the ability to take your article and add value to it, could be very valuable.”

**Third call – July 8th, 2010**

**Daniel Jacobson, NPR**

[Slideshare presentations](http://www.slideshare.net/danieljacobson)

An API is a comprehensive distribution pipe for all content. NPR built their own API so they could have full control over the content and it’s packaging. Building their own API has allowed them next level control and is the center of their distribution and mobile strategy. This innovation spawned interest from their general community, triggering specialists to come in and develop based on the needs of the target audience. As the first in public media to dive into mobile, in determining need they implemented strategies like: usability studies, user profiling, survey of the marketplace.

Daniel emphasized the value in testing a beta of the app with your audience. When they tested they were surprised at the feedback they got and each time understood something different about what was needed. He warned that apps require a lot of maintenance which needs to be accounted for and stressed the importance of a mobile website. “Focus on serving your audience rather than trying to build communities right out of the gate.”

**Since building their mobile application traffic has more than doubled to their site and mobile traffic makes up 40% of their pageviews.**

Mobile apps not only build your brand, they drive pageviews and can generate revenue from allowing subscriptions, selling banner ads, etc. (and there’s more room to explore revenue generation here.)

**4th call – July16th, 2010**

**Jake Shapiro, PRX**

PRX distributes public radio content and packaging. They also help develop new content for public radio and reach new audiences while developing sustainable business models. They developed the Public Radio Player, the first in mobile public radio that streams content from public radio across the country. They found it difficult to get partners to promote a generically developed app. And there was a large effort to merge multiple mediums in one platform and with so many players.

Projecting costs, Jake estimated $120K in development plus $60-80K in coordination cost but that an entry level app could go $10-50K.

PRX signed with an ad network, National Public Media who has primarily handled broadcast, digital and now mobile for NPR. Ads include banner ads at the bottom of the page, another streams the twitter feed, providing a window into their social media strategy. He also noted that everyone should have web versions of their app and that with all of this they have noticed increased participation.