

More Work Needed On 3G Healthcare Applications

Submitted by: Steinkrug Publications Ltd

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6th September 2004. Cambridge, UK: Wireless Healthcare, the Cambridge UK based ehealth consultancy, has suggested that a special interest group is formed to develop and exploit healthcare applications for 3G networks.

In a recently published white paper Wireless Healthcare lists some of the problems specialist ehealth vendors encounter when they attempt to market products and services in the UK. The paper points out that the NHS's National Programme for IT (NPfIT) has had a radical impact on the ehealth market. Niche vendors have seen their evangelistic early adopters within the NHS replaced by risk adverse Application Service Providers (ASPs). Wireless Healthcare suggests that an alliance of ehealth vendors could produce bundles of proven applications. As these bundles would require minimal integration by ASPs they would have greater appeal than a selection of individual products. An alliance of vendors would also find it easier to negotiate with the companies that have already won contracts to supply the NHS with IT infrastructure.

Wireless Healthcare believes an organisation such as Cambridge 3G would provide an ideal vehicle for an ehealth special interest group. The company suggests that Cambridge 3G's test network could be used to prove applications and increase awareness of the potential of 3G as an ehealth communications platform. It could also help resolve key technical issues relating to the use of mobile packet networks for mission critical applications.

Wireless Healthcare feels that an ehealth special interest group would also attract members from outside the IT and communications community. "We have already seen pharmaceutical, biotechnology and IT companies come together to develop home testing kits for diabetes sufferers." Explains Peter Kruger, Senior Analyst with Wireless Healthcare. "There is no reason why companies who provide dietary information and health screening services cannot work with communications hardware and software vendors to produce 3G based ehealth services."

The paper also notes that companies are finding it increasingly difficult to finance ehealth projects – in part due to subtle changes in the way the EU funds projects and the political turmoil surrounding the future of the Department of Trade and Industry. Wireless Healthcare believes that an alliance of companies might find it easier to attract grants and funding.

Wireless Healthcare is a UK based consultancy specialising in mobile healthcare and ehealth. It has recently published the Wireless Healthcare 2004 report - a comprehensive review of the market for wireless based ehealth products and services.

The white paper "Wireless eHealth and the NPfIT" can be downloaded from www.wirelesshealthcare.co.uk

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