

Daniel Graf - co-founder, Kyte:

Why iPhone apps are a great marketing channel



Two weeks ago, we announced our Kyte iPhone Applications Framework and launched

Kyte-powered iPhone and iPod touch applications for five Interscope Geffen A&M artists: Lady GaGa, The Pussycat Dolls, The All American Rejects, Soulja Boy Tell 'Em and Keri Hilson.

The apps are available on the Apple App Store, and include artist videos, custom branding, links to buy songs and merchandise, an RSS reader for news, and community features such as chat, comments, ratings and sharing. Fans can download the applications for free, but it is up to the label whether they want to charge for the apps or make them available for free.

It was important to us to make the framework flexible, so that brands can choose the features they want. For example, the RSS module can be used to push news, tour dates or whatever you want, and then there's also an HTML module that lets you do pretty much anything - including getting

people to join your fan club. The sky's the limit. We don't see it being restricted to music either. Music is at the forefront, absolutely, but this kind of thing is interesting for sports, entertainment and TV, for example.

We think these apps are much more compelling than some of the other artist iPhone apps we've seen in the market. Nobody wants to have just news and images that stay the same for four months at a time. You might check it out once and then never again. The reason people start an app or go to a website is fresh content and interactivity. That's what it's all about.

Of course, this kind of application is only as good as the effort the artist puts into it. We're finding some best practices from our work with artists both online and in mobile. They should do at least two to three videos a week so there's always fresh content, and the fans know what's going on and feel attached to it.

For example, we have artists like Soulja Boy Tell 'Em who will often do live-streaming several times a day, others like Keri Hilson who do 1-2 minute clip uploads several times a week, and then there are artists like Lady Gaga and The Pussycat Dolls who upload longer, pre-produced, videos a few times a month.

One of my favourites is the Sony group Franz Ferdinand, who produce super cool footage several times a week. Though they don't have an iPhone app yet, fans can watch their

Kyte channel on their MySpace profile. It's awesome what they're doing - all black and white footage that they cut together before uploading. It's a piece of art!

But they also do live webcam chats with the fans from wherever they are - recently they did one from the green room at the Jay Leno show in the US. It's great when bands you really like use this kind of technology. And the beauty of our iPhone App Framework is that the same content in Franz Ferdinand's online Kyte channel, will be delivered as a fully branded, interactive iPhone app.

Our launch with Interscope was just the beginning. In the coming months, you will see other labels and artists, as well as other media and entertainment companies launching Kyte-powered iPhone and iPod touch apps.

And we're not limiting the Kyte experience to just the iPhone. We offer a complete online and mobile platform that allows brands to reach audiences on websites, social networks, blogs and on any web-enabled mobile device. Back in November 2008, we introduced our Kyte Mobile Web offering, which delivers the full Kyte experience to any web-enabled mobile device, including the ability to watch, rate and comment on shows, and chat with other viewers. So for example, fans that don't have an iPhone but want to check out The All American Rejects' Kyte channel on their Nokia phone, can go to m.allamericanrejects.com, and enjoy the

same content in a fully branded experience that's optimized for the Nokia.

What's better about an app than a mobile website? It's more accessible. Activity alerts will be especially powerful. Fans will be able to discover new videos news items, tour dates, and more every time they launch the app. These apps also help converge brands' online and mobile audiences into one community. So, the cost benefit for the label is they no longer need to have an online video solution that is separate from mobile - it's all integrated and the label can build one community.

The mobile websites currently account for around 10% of our traffic, versus 90% from online. But we haven't really pushed the mobile websites, so I think it will change over time with these applications coming out. Not dramatically, because a lot of the online traffic comes from artist websites, MySpace and Facebook. It's going to take time for mobile to get to 30-40% of the traffic, but eventually it will be way more compelling - if I'm a Pussycat Dolls fan, as soon as something happens I can get it right there.

For more on Kyte's iPhone Applications Framework check www.kyte.com/iphone