Mobile Data Services

Egypt Survey Results 2010

The world is witnessing continuous changes in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), with new products evolving every day. Mobile data services have led the revolution in the ICT world during the past years, and have made it possible to connect to the world at any time and place. Hence, it has become very important to measure the mobile data quality of services; so as to capture the effect it has on people and on different aspects of life.

Mobile data services have spread in the whole world, establishing their way in developing, as well as developed countries. As for Egypt, the developments in mobile data services come along with the phenomenal performance of the Egyptian mobile market at large; that resulted from the collaborative effort exerted by all players in the industry. The growth in mobile subscribers has continued during the past years to increase from 41.27 million subscribers in 2008, to 55.35 million subscribers in 2009 with annual growth rate of 34.12%, then to 58.97 million subscribers in June 2010. Mobile Penetration also increased steadily from 54.8% in 2008, to 72.13% in 2009 and finally 76.2% in June 2010.

In this regard, the Egyptian mobile market seems very promising and encouraging to the entrance of new products and extension of existing ones, especially those related to mobile data services; which has the potential for growth and development, in addition to its role in development and economic growth, due to the wide range of services it provides.

Hence, Egypt's Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT) in cooperation with the University of Southern California, and The National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA), has conducted a study to measure the mobile data services usage habits and quality of services in Egypt. Mobile data services is the usage of mobiles in any other services other than voice calling, including mobile broadband services. Examples of such services are sending text and picture messages, accessing the internet through the mobile for emailing, getting information, downloading, internet browsing and communicating. The study measures usage patterns of mobile data services, with detailed analysis on frequency of usage, compatibility with lifestyles, location of usage, willingness to pay, customer satisfaction and potential interests of customers. The analysis of such

patterns helps to evaluate the quality of services provided, their advantages as well as their shortcomings

The study is based on a survey conducted by phone, in which the target population was mobile subscribers who are using mobile data services through their wireless cell phones. The survey was aimed to reach a sample of 1,000 subscriber using data services via their mobiles. Hence, 1,433 interviews were conducted at Greater Cairo, and Alexandria from Mobinil, Etisalat and Vodafone. The sample is a stratified random sample according to operators, subscription system and gender.

Survey results revealed that 73% of the subscribers interviewed are using the mobile data services, most of them are males who are youth at the age of 18-34 years old, with monthly expenditure ranges from 500 – 1500 EGP.

Studying the pattern of mobile data service usage, the study reveals that the most used activity of the service is Getting Information and News (57.2% of the users), followed by exchanging e-mails (22.8%). Most of the respondents use the mobile data service for personal purposes more than work related purposes (87% versus 2%, while 11% use it for both). The most likely location of using the service is at home (42%), followed by at transit (35%). Also, the highest frequency of mobile data service usage is more than 120 minutes/week (55.3%).

Furthermore, the survey reveals that being not interested was the highest barrier for not using the mobile data service (14.2%). On the other hand reducing the service cost is the most attractive factor for future use (49%). Finally, the survey studies the main features of the Egyptian mobile phone market, which reveals that people tend to use mobile phone brands, established in the market for long periods, and consider Multifunction as the most important specification.

The study reveals that mobiles have evolved from just being an invention in itself made for communicating purposes, to a catalyst that ignites more innovative ideas. In this context, results of the study help in understanding the patterns of using mobile applications especially in innovative ways. It is worth mentioning that Egypt's ICT strategy 2011-2014 focuses on innovation in the ICT sector, as a means to provide long term growth for both the ICT sector and the economy, and the mobile data services are one of the factors that have high potential in this regard.