

WINDOWS PHONE 7: Microsoft's Entrant to the Smartphone Wars

BACKGROUND

Windows Phone 7 is the highly anticipated mobile operating system developed by Microsoft and slated for public release on November 8, 2010. The WP7 OS is Microsoft's answer to Apple's iOS and Google's Android OS; it boasts a redesigned touchscreen UI, which uses multi-touch technology and is based on Microsoft's Metro design language.

DESIGN

The Metro design language incorporates five principles valued by Microsoft: Clean, Light, Open, Fast; Celebrate Typography; Alive in Motion; Content, Not Chrome; and Authentically Digital. See [here](#) for more on the Metro design language and how it will be used in Windows Phone 7.

From a user experience standpoint, customizable tiles will make up the WP7 Start screen. Tiles are linked to important features, applications, and individual items such as phone, music and videos, contacts, web pages and MS Office

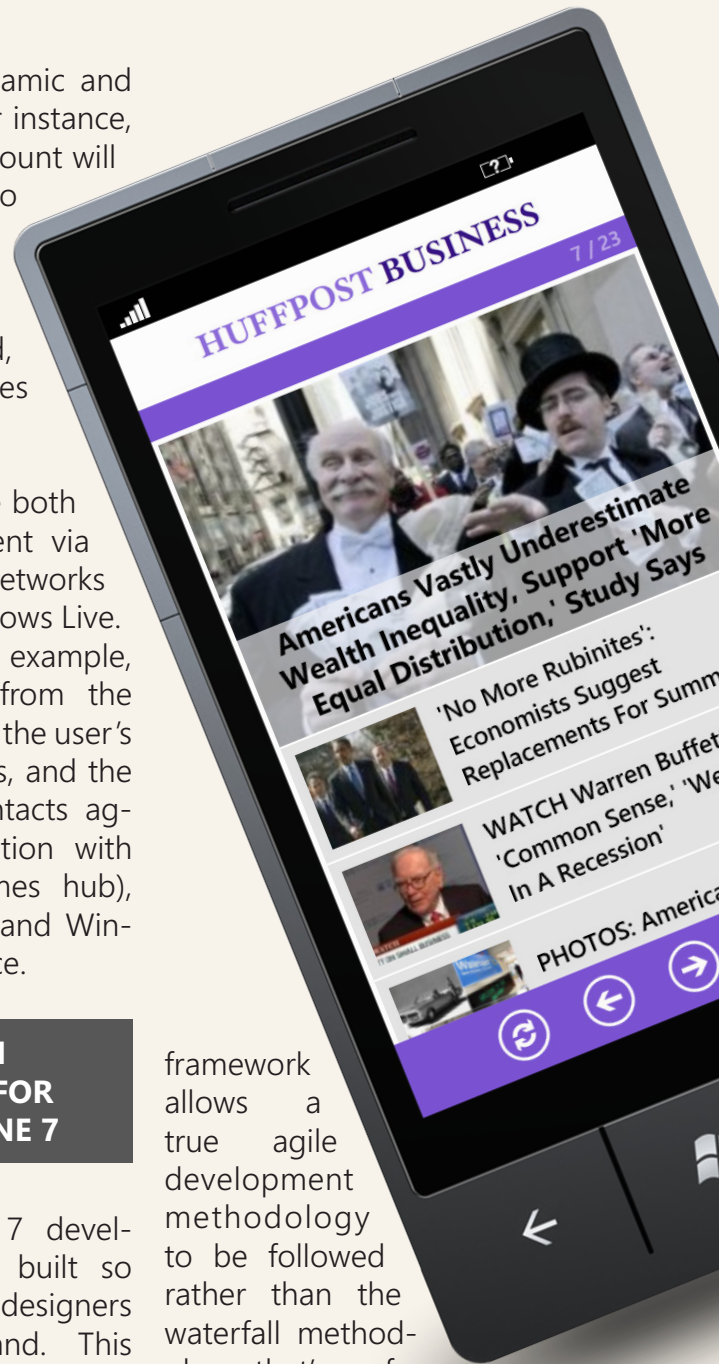
products. Tiles are dynamic and update in real-time. For instance, the tile for an email account will automatically update to display the current number of unread messages; users will have the ability to add, delete, and rearrange tiles on the Start screen.

These tiles will combine both local and online content via integration with social networks like Facebook and Windows Live. The Pictures hub, for example, shows photos taken from the device's camera roll and the user's Facebook photo albums, and the People hub shows contacts aggregated from integration with Zune, Xbox Live (Games hub), Bing, Microsoft Office, and Windows Phone Marketplace.

APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT FOR WINDOWS PHONE 7

The Windows Phone 7 development framework is built so that developers and designers can work hand-in-hand. This

framework allows a true agile development methodology to be followed rather than the waterfall methodology that's prefer-



able when developing for iOS and Android.

Application development environments for Windows Phone 7 include Silverlight, the .NET Compact Framework, and XNA. Silverlight is powered by the .NET framework and is compatible with multiple browsers, operating systems, and devices.

Silverlight and .NET are two of the most well-known languages by developers, which will eventually drive down the cost of developing apps for WP7. There have been over 500,000 downloads of the WP7 software development kit already.

Expression Blend 4 and Visual Studio 2010 are the primary design tools for creating WP7 applications. Expression Blend is an advanced user interface design tool that allows designers to assemble rich user interfaces, and empower them with Silverlight. Designers using Expression Blend work comfortably alongside developers working in Visual Studio.

Visual Studio is an integrated developer environment that ties in to Expression Blend and allows developers to tackle tasks ranging from design to testing.

DEVELOPMENT COSTS AND TIMEFRAME

Initially, developing native apps

for Windows Phone 7 will cost roughly the same as developing native apps for iOS and Android. Development costs can be expected to decrease as Microsoft perfects the development environment.

One reason development costs will decrease is the ease with which developers can deliver testable builds to clients. .XAP files can be sent throughout the development process, which will make changing the application mid-stream much easier than when developing for the iPhone, iPad, or Android.

Another reason development costs will decrease is the number of developers already familiar with Silverlight and .NET.

MONETIZING APPS

Microsoft's Advertising Exchange will allow publishers to serve targeted ads to consumers based on demographic, carrier, and

**ANDROID OS
MARKET SHARE
FOR RECENT
ACQUIRERS ROSE
FROM 6% IN Q4
2009 TO 17% IN Q1
2010 TO 27% IN
Q2 2010.**

location targeting. Ads can be displayed in text or image form, and advertisers will have the opportunity to insert Click to Call and Click to Website ad features.

Leading ad networks like InMobi, MobClix, and Millennial Media are among the networks that will be serving ads on the Windows Phone 7 platform upon its release to the public.

Reporting features will include in-app ad analytics, ad inventory, clicks, CPM, and sell-thru rate. As with other popular platforms, app publishers will also have the opportunity to charge users for their apps, although it remains to be seen whether WP7 will be more akin to Apple's App Store, where roughly 70% of all apps are paid or the Android Market, where nearly 2 out of every 3 apps is free and piracy is much more widespread.

USER UPTAKE

While it's impossible to say how quickly users will migrate to the WP7 platform, some clues can be gleaned from Android's relatively rapid ascendance in the smartphone marketplace.

In the first quarter of 2010, according to research firm NPD, Android accounted for 28% of all unit sales, trailing RIM (36%) and ahead of Apple (21%). In the second quarter of 2010, phones running Android leapfrogged RIM to reach 33% of all unit sales,



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These upticks in sales led to Android making significant in-roads in the percentage of all cell phone subscribers tied to Android phones. The figure rose from 4% in the fourth quarter of 2009 to 9% in the first quarter of 2010 to 13% in the second quarter of 2010, according to Nielsen.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Every Windows Phone 7 will come equipped with a Qualcomm 1GHz Snapdragon application processor. The Snapdragon processor includes 3D graphics functions, support for high-megapixel cameras, power optimization, and rich multimedia features, including HD video recording and playback abilities.

The Snapdragon processor was created to power a new generation of smartphones and tablets. Not coincidentally, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer has hinted that a Microsoft tablet will be on the market by Christmas.

DEVICES AND CARRIERS

AT&T and T-Mobile will be the only two carriers of Windows Phone 7 when it's released in the US on November 8. Verizon will reportedly be added as a service provider early in 2011.

A variety of handsets - nine to be precise - from Samsung, LG, HTC, and Dell will be available at launch or soon after. Each will come with its own distinctive feature(s), ranging from slide-out vertical and horizontal keyboards to a built-in kickstand for hands-free use to a 4.3-inch display.

WINDOWS PHONE MARKETPLACE

Windows Phone 7 apps will be distributed through a central marketplace akin to the iTunes App Store or the Android Marketplace.

Like the iTunes App Store, purveyors of apps in the Windows Phone Marketplace will keep 70% of profits made from app sales. Payouts to developers for downloaded applications will begin in February 2011. The Windows

EACH WINDOWS PHONE HANDSET WILL CARRY (AT LEAST) A 1GHZ SNAPDRAGON PROCESSOR, SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR A NEW BREED OF SMARTPHONES.

Marketplace will include reporting tools that let publishers and developers know how well their apps are performing.

THE HUFFINGTON POST FOR WINDOWS PHONE 7

PointAbout had the opportunity to develop the Windows Phone 7 app for the Huffington Post, one of the world's leading providers of up-to-the-minute commentary and coverage.

"Working with PointAbout has been a terrific experience," said Paul Berry, Chief Technology Officer of The Huffington Post. "As a company that prides itself on innovative content delivery with a unique voice, HuffPost seeks partners that have both strategic vision and technical abilities - both of which PointAbout offers."

The Huffington Post's app was one of the very first to be approved by Microsoft for consumption on the WP7 platform.

PointAbout's VP of Professional Services, Pete Johnson, said, "We are thrilled to be one of the first mobile application developers to gain expertise in developing for Windows Phone. Windows Phone 7 is showing a lot of promise as a strong platform for the enterprise, and we are prepared to guide companies in the strategy and development necessary for large-scale mobile implementations."



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