

Surfing the junk

Fifty thousand page impressions - that's how many page hits Junk Mail Publishing's mobile services for Love Mail and Job Mail achieved within a month of their launch. "We are delighted by the uptake of these services because it means that we are delivering something that consumers are hungry for while extending our reach into previously untapped markets," says Felix Erken, managing director of Junk Mail.

"Junk Mail is one of the first companies, and certainly the first publishing house in South Africa, to make a mini-browser user-friendly for mobile phone-users," continues Erken. "Our solutions for Love Mail and Job Mail were developed with the mobile-user specifically in mind with the aim of eliminating the perception that surfing the net using a cell phone is tedious and tough-to-navigate."

According to Erken, in less than a month, 25 000 users had used the new mini-browser services and these numbers are growing steadily with about 2000 visitors and 100 000 page impressions a week across both sites.

Built from scratch

The mini-browsers were designed and built from scratch by Junk Mail's in-house IT team. By scaling down with reduced graphics and text wherever possible, the team has created a solution that makes viewing and navigating the Love Mail and Job Mail content via mobile phone simple and fast. The mini-browsers make use of 3G or GPRS technology, which costs about R2.00 per megabyte for downloaded information.

Erken explains that the Job Mail and Love Mail mobile services provide users with instant and easy access to thousands of career and love-match opportunities using any internet-enabled cell phone.

"Competition in the online recruitment industry is fierce and we believe that our mobile offering is what puts us heads and shoulders above the rest. Our mini-browser allows mobile-users to search for career opportunities advertised online even if they do not have access to the internet from their computers," he says.

Interaction with suitable candidates is facilitated by Love Mail via SMS so registered members can select whether or not to make their contact details available, thus ensuring their privacy. Unlike internet-dating sites, Love Mail is a mobile service and subscribers do not have to have access to a computer and the internet in order to use it.

Breaking down barriers

"We believe that this offering breaks down the barriers. By engaging technology we have made this type of service more accessible and attractive to use so people will become increasingly willing to embrace this new-age dating concept," says

Erken.

The mini-browser services, which are still very much in the test-phase, are offered free of charge to users. Erken explains that as users become accustomed to the solution and become more confident using it, the company will add new functionality and refine the services to improve the customer experience. As such, a small subscription fee may become necessary in the future in order to facilitate technological enhancements.

"The biggest challenge for our IT team, who developed the mini-browsers in less than a month, is to stay abreast of technology advancements and evolve with them," adds Erken.

According to Erken, the main reason that the Job Mail and Love Mail services have been so successful is because Junk Mail, the leader in classified advertising and personals, owns the content, providing users with access to over 100 000 credible adverts each week.

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