Marketing & Strategy Innovation

**Disruptive Innovation Mashup? The Copenhagen Wheel**

by [John Sviokla](mailto:john.sviokla@futurelab.com) on 16 August, 2010 - 21:11

Big Think reported yesterday that the Copenhagen Wheel, which was designed at MIT’s media lab is going to win the $15,000 Dyson Prize for design. The video below gives an idea of the wheel’s most salient attributes. This Copenhagen wheel is derived from the [Green Wheel](http://www.greenwheel.com), which was written about a lot in 2009.

I hope that this current version is something that the inventors will actually try to commercialize, and it does not become a permanent prototype with a nice idea and no adoption, like the [Aerocar](http://www.aerocar.com).

In any event, I think the most interesting part of this innovation is the way that they mashed up items from the physical world of the marketplace and the virtual world of the marketspace. The wheel takes advantage of:

- A standard bike;
• A standard smart phone;
• A standard set of applications for location;
• A standard set of applications for pollution;
• A standard development platform for the creation of new software to track your effort, and mileage;
• An integration a new currency of Green Dollars, to reward your contribution to the environment.

With the coming of devices like the iPad at prices which will soon be below $100, I think we will see lots of “intelligence” and “function” integrated with typical, non-intelligent things and locations we have today. For example, any physical object that moves can have a map, tracking device and interface to its function. So, every vehicle can be retrofitted with a smart interface to any information function of the web. Imagine used cars with electronics that are superior to new ones, because they are not “locked in” to the new model.

Every location will have smarts built into it. Already, we have televisions everywhere — but those televisions will soon be “touchable” — because in the bar, the coffee shop, or in the railway station, the advertising economics will be much better if passersby can “choose” certain things, and therefore, every location will have touchable smarts embedded into it.

Every important device will be networked to the right audience and information source. The idea that any hospital bed; any glucose meter or any patient call button will not be on the network will seem like an interesting anachronism as soon as these touchable screens, connected over WiFi are cheaper than the stand along specific purpose devices of today.

Those firms that take a lesson from the Copenhagen Wheel will be better off. All of us should ask, how can we reinvent the customer experience — by using current, standard, mashable capabilities. If they can reinvent the simple wheel, what cannot be redone — only better?

Image source: aspheric.lens


1 comment

Daniel Karpantschof says:

17 Aug 2010, 15:28

It's pretty unclear what the wheel does though. Tracking, online functions, data, etc. can be done by the phone.

I assume the wheel is a generator with a built in motor to flick on when e.g. going up hill - but that's it?! That's a revolution?

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