

‘NOMO PHOBIA’ MEANS CONSUMERS ‘NEED’ MOBILE PHONES AROUND THE CLOCK: WADARO DEVELOPS NEW SYSTEM TO KEEP THEM GOING

Wadaro works with global sourcing provider Patni to develop SIM-based automated network monitoring solution

Wadaro is a technology start up, based in Daresbury on the outskirts of Manchester. It has developed the telecommunications industry’s first SIM-based embedded software that enables network operators to understand how terminals – particularly mobile phones - and also networks – are performing by geographic location in real time.

In a mature market such as telecoms, innovation in back office systems and diagnostics is rare, yet a new player has entered the market and developed a solution that offers network operators valuable information about the performance of their network to help them ensure the quality of their service. Wadaro has achieved this by innovation through outsourcing, teaming up with global sourcing provider Patni to develop a powerful proposition.

Nomo-phobia

As a nation, Brits are addicted to their mobile phones. A survey this year, carried out by YouGov¹, found that being out of mobile-phone contact is as stressful as moving house or breaking up with a partner for nearly one in five phone users.

Dubbed "nomo phobia", the survey also found that the stress of running out of battery or credit, losing one's handset and not having network coverage affects 53 per cent of the UK's 45 million mobile-phone users. For consumers and businesses alike, having a working mobile phone is critical.

Monitoring network performance

Wadaro’s founder and CEO, Robert Wakeling, picks up the story: “For mobile network operators (MNOs), monitoring mobile phone and network performance is a costly but

¹ Source: The Independent – ‘Phone-reliant Britons in the grip of 'nomo-phobia'
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/phonereliant-britons-in-the-grip-of-nomophobia-802722.html>

necessary aspect of service delivery. Traditional methodology requires a number of manual processes including drive testing and network probing to acquire large volumes of raw data for processing into management information. It's a heavy work from a network point of view and the information gained only provides a historic view of service performance. In some cases, such as where geography dictates there to be poor public infrastructure or one such as an emerging economy where deployment and operating cost must be low, traditional solutions are simply unworkable”.

“Large network operators – those with 15 million plus subscribers – have the scale of operation that enables them to make huge multi million pound investments into network monitoring. Small operators, however, just can't afford to do the same. Coupled with increased sophistication of mobile service, that now include applications such as web browsing, email, instant messaging and MMS, it all makes monitoring and diagnosing service issues a complex and expensive process,” adds Wakeling.

Wakeling developed the concept of a 'Total Analysis Package', which uses small client software embedded into the SIM. This enables network and terminal performance information to be sent directly from each subscriber's phone directly to the service provider by SMS or USSD. This means using the subscriber as a network probe to avoid significant capital and operational expenditure usually associated with service monitoring.

The main issue for Wadaro was finding the right partner to help develop the solution. Requiring hundreds of product development hours, Wakeling didn't have the level of investment required to hire a complete development team, so decided to outsource the task of building a proof of concept system to research the benefits of TAP monitoring and to support early business development with MNOs and network equipment manufacturers.

After reviewing the leading global sourcing providers, Wakeling selected Patni, a global provider with a strong track record of product engineering and development.

The offshoring solution

The project was managed by Patni's Product Engineering Services (PES) team, based in the UK, utilising additional resources from Patni's offshore delivery centre in Bangalore, India. Kimmo Solla, vice president and head of Patni's PES practice for the EMEA region, explains: "Having secured the first round of funding to develop the product, Wadaro needed to build a proof of concept quickly and cost effectively, to be in a position to sell it in to the network operators. We've got a lot of experience in working with start ups and businesses in the telecoms space, so were delighted to be on board as Wadaro's partner."

Three months later, Patni and Wadaro had built a proof of concept product that enables MNOs to measure the quality of their Radio Access Network (RAN).

The SIM-based software client monitors RAN performance and reports, via SMS or USSD directly to the operator, on events such as access failure, cell handover failure, dropped voice calls and loss of service. This information is presented on satellite and/or road maps, so that the operator can easily visualise areas of their network that perform poorly.

The system provides further reporting capabilities to make better decisions about performance of particular models in terms of network performance. Meanwhile, using near-time reporting, customer service representatives are provided with more information about the subscriber's network performance, enabling them to better respond to callers and shorten the duration of each call.

"In short, our solution provides operators with vastly greater intelligence of their network and handset estate, providing new opportunities to monitor performance and make service improvements," says Wakeling.

Working with Patni

"We set Patni a stiff challenge to develop a product in such as tight timescale and I'm delighted to say that the team in Bangalore delivered," explains Wakeling. "Working on

every aspect, from producing the Server and Maps GUI to developing the SIM Client Software, we have collaborated to produce a compelling product proposition”.

“There’s a perception in the marketplace that offshoring is about cutting costs. I believe that anyone looking to outsource development should look beyond cost and also consider other benefits offered by their chosen partner such as resource scalability, quality of workmanship and their experience in your target market.

“Patni’s thinking was dynamic and innovative, without ever losing sight of the customer requirement,” says Wakeling.

Wadaro is currently beta testing the product with a telecoms operator and is in advanced discussions with others to launch initially in the UK. In a highly competitive market, product and service differentiation is key for operators. The Patni developed Wadaro solution could well play a key roll in helping operators to further improve quality of service as “nomo phobic” mobile phone usage continues to rise.

For further information about Wadaro, please visit <http://www.wadaro.com>

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