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Apple iPhone upgrade delivers opportunity for app developers

By Rodney H. Brown

Video Gallery

If you think the market for applications and products for Apple Inc.'s iPhone is hot, you ain't seen nothin' yet.

Facing competition from the release last year of the G1 phone running the Android operating system from Google Inc., and the new and highly touted Palm Pre, Apple released version 3.0 of its iPhone OS last week, and developers in New England see a much wider world of opportunity. Already, the App Store has more than 53,000 apps available.

For example, Vlingo Inc. in Cambridge has ported its voice-recognition software to the iPhone; and in Maine, mCaddie Inc., doing business as AccelGolf, has a mobile network that includes a rangefinder for the iPhone. Even Canton-based Dunkin' Brands Inc. is getting in on it — with the Dunkin' Run app that will help you organize a Dunkin' Donuts coffee run.

Here, we profile companies that picked the iPhone as their platform of choice and some looking at the iPhone platform to help expand an

established customer base.

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Scvngr Inc.
Location: Boston
Employees: 20, plus 12 paid interns
Founded: 2007
Web: **www.scvngr.com**

Mobile game platform developer Scvngr Inc. likes to have fun, and that is one of the reasons the Boston company ported its scavenger hunt game tech to the iPhone.

"Developing on the iPhone is so much fun — it is an enjoyable process," said founder and "chief ninja" Seth Priebatsch.

But landing new customers was the primary reason for taking its existing game tech into the App Store.

"We've got over 200 clients now in 42 states," Priebatsch said. "Somewhere between 20 and 30 of those were at least helped along in the sale by having a demo of the iPhone app in their hands."

Within a couple of weeks, Scvngr will have its new iPhone application live on the App Store. That new application will take advantage of all the updated technology available through the 3.0 version of the iPhone operating system — embedded video, photo streams and geo-tagging, among others.

"I think it will definitely bring in a lot more clients, because it is really an elegant application," Priebatsch said. "It should bring a 15 to 20 percent bump in the rate in which we are getting new clients."

Apperian Inc.
Location: South Boston
Employees: 15
Founded: 2009
Web: **www.apperian.com**

South Boston developer Apperian Inc. is so dedicated to the idea of the iPhone as a
development platform that it is shifting its business model to focus on the iPhone.

Few would be more familiar with that potential than CEO Chuck Goldman, who left Apple in
January to launch Apperian, taking some senior developers and some salespeople with him.

The company, launched in January, got its feet wet doing consulting and services work for
enterprises that needed help with integrating the iPhone into their legacy systems. Now, in
just six months, Apperian has been able to transition to primarily working on its own apps,
Goldman said.

"We're developing our own products, our own IP, specifically for the enterprise. These will
be products that will help mobilize the work force," Goldman said. One of its first platforms
will be around mobile commerce, Goldman said, and the release of the iPhone OS 3.0 is
making that possible.

"It's greased the skids in IT a lot more with things like security, remote wipe, full
encryption," he said.

ThinkFlood Inc.
Location: Waltham
Employees: Under 10
Founded: 2007
Web: **http://thinkflood.com**

For Waltham-based ThinkFlood Inc., the key to succeeding in the iPhone market involves
developing both software and hardware. The company is about to launch its RedEye device,
which will turn any iPhone or iPod Touch into a universal remote control.

"The iPhone has wi-fi so it can communicate with a bunch of devices but doesn't have an
infrared output to control older devices," said ThinkFlood president Matthew Eagar.

So ThinkFlood has made a device that receives an iPhone's wi-fi signal and sends out an IR
signal to control "basically anything in your home entertainment center." The company also
has a software app, which will be a free download from the App Store, that allows the
iPhone to learn which signals control which devices.

"Since it works over wi-fi, you can use this anywhere you get a wi-fi signal in your house,"

Eagar said, "So if the kids haven't turned off the TV, you can just pull out your iPhone and shut it off."

The device will cost about $150, which is in the ballpark of similar universal remotes, such as the Harmony 1.

Eagar is a big fan of the potential of the iPhone, and sees a strong future for his company and others.

"I think the iPhone software development platform is pretty approachable. I think there are lot of people developing for the first time on that platform and that's a good thing."

Raizlabs Corp.
Location: Brookline
Employees: 4
Founded: 2003
Web: **www.raizlabs.com**

When Apple launched its iPhone, Greg Raiz at Raizlabs Corp. was so impressed with the potential of the product that he shifted the company's business model from a general contract software application developer to one focusing almost exclusively on the iPhone.

"About half (of our time) was consulting for other companies, about half building our own software. In the past two years, we have shifted almost all of our internal development to the iPhone," Raiz said.

Since then, the Brookline company has steadily built apps for clients — including the iPhone app for the RunKeeper GPS device from FitnessKeeper Inc. of Boston — and for itself.

It is now about to launch an app in conjunction with AOL LLC and its ShoutCast Internet radio unit that will turn an iPhone into a clock radio — one with access to ShoutCast's thousands of streaming radio stations.

Raiz says the 3.0 IPhone OS release will cause a flurry of development activity. "You are going to see a lot of stuff made for the iPhone coming out this year," Raiz said.

Char Software Inc.

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Employees: 4
Founded: 2008
Web: **www.localytics.com**

The iPhone launched a thousand small ships captained by app developers hungry for opportunities. Cambridge-based Char Software Inc., doing business as Localytics, hopes to provide them a road map.

When it comes to finding a sustainable business model, "People aren't having much luck with that," said Localytics founder Raj Aggarwal. "Nobody's figured out how to make a real business."

Aggarwal's startup, now working out of office space in Boston's TechStars incubator program, has developed an analytics platform for mobile app developers. Last week, the company's four employees and two interns brought the product out of closed beta. It's designed to give app developers a targeted look at who is downloading their app, where they are, how they are using it, and when.

"You wouldn't put up a website without (using) Google Analytics," Aggarwal said. "We think it will be the same for mobile apps."

In addition, the company has been trying to build a community of developers, founding a professional group called Mass Mobile, which hosted last week's Mobile Monday event at the Cambridge Innovation Center.
Brookline's Raiz presented on the new opportunities available with the iPhone 3.0 GS update.

Staff Writer Galen Moore contributed to this report.

Posted by: dlongworth@c... / Wednesday, July 1st, 2009 - 1:18 pm EDT
For those of us who use devices like Blackberry's for work while traveling for sales or other on the road affairs, it would be nice if Apple would offer either a version of the iPhone with out the camera, or a way to disable the camera. When business people travel to other companies, all devices with cameras have to be left at the door. This is for security reasons. This especially holds true with companies related to defense, but also holds true for high tech companies as well. It's a real problem because it is very useful to actually be able to carry your phone into a company or account so you have access to email and contacts.Ironically this is a major deterrant to the adaptation of camera

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