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Interview with Raj Tumuluri, Openstream

Platform facilitates single authoring of multimodal mobile applications

Raj Tumuluri, President & CEO, Openstream, was interviewed in late September. Raj has been leading the multimodal platform and context-aware mobile applications development at Openstream. With over 18 years of experience in distributed computing, multimodal technology, and international standards development, Raj is a co-author of several speech, multimodal and ubiquitous web standards at the W3C. His current research focuses on human-centric-interfaces in context-aware, distributed mobile applications using multimodality and OSGi technology.

Please outline Openstream's business focus and products.

Openstream's primary business focus is enterprise mobility. Most of our products and solutions help enterprises extend the reach of enterprise software/applications to the field force and enable back-end integration of rich data collected in the field. We offer products that enable enterprises to develop these mobile solutions themselves using our *Cue-me* context-aware multimodal platform and also offer several mobile-force automation solutions for vertical industries such as healthcare, financial services, energy and utilities, digital media and publishing.

Openstream has been involved in a number of speech initiatives recently, including hosting the W3C Workshop on Conversational Applications in June and sponsoring the upcoming Mobile Voice Conference in January. How does Openstream see speech technology relating to its strategic objectives?

Speech and multimodality have been central to our strategy since inception. And we were the first to deploy a multimodal field-force automation solution commercially in 2005. Clearly, the recent trends from several leading mobile Operating Systems/platform developers validate our approach. An emphasis on usability and frictionless interactivity is the key metric for the success of any mobile solution, and speech technology provides that convenience to users while on the move.

How does Cue-me make a developer's job easier?

Cue-me is a standards based context-aware multimodal client/server platform that facilitates single authoring of multimodal mobile applications that combine speech recognition, text-to-speech, touch, gesture, image-capture, location, and other contextual attributes. It addresses the device-form-factor adaptation and also provides a conducive interface for friction-less context-aware interaction on-the-move.

Given cue-me open Eclipse-based development environment, developers can author multimodal applications using standard web-paradigm and markup-languages and yet be able to integrate and manage contextual attributes such as camera, network-connection, GPS, and other sensory I/O mechanisms, without having to write any native code for any of the popular mobile device-platforms or speech technologies in the market today. The ability to manage deployed applications and delivery context in a device-independent way is an important benefit of our OSGi-based platform approach. [OSGi is a dynamic module system for Java from the **OSGi Alliance**.]

There is no need to maintain multiple code bases or risk proprietary lock-in, as the standards-based interfaces of cue-me speech and other modality components allow for integration of speech technologies from leading vendors.

How do standards fit into Openstream's products?

We have been contributing and leading several standardization efforts to add speech and multimodality to existing browser and mobile technologies. Incidentally, Openstream is also the founding member of a new W3C group that is working on standardization of HTML 5 speech integration. Our multimodal platform is built on open standards and implements several Markup languages that we are proud to have taken-part in the development of at W3C, such as EMMA, VoiceXML, SRGS, SCXML, InkML, CCXML, etc.

What is your pricing model?

We offer both an enterprise perpetual license as well as cloud-based Platform-as-a-service (PaaS) of the development and run-time software.

Any final comments?

We believe that natural and conversational interfaces are going to be heralding the next generation of information creation and consumption applications, and Openstream is poised to be on the leading edge of that evolution.

Mobile Voice Conference 2011
January 24-26, 2010, San Jose, California
www.mobilevoiceconference.com

The conference examines practical applications of speech recognition, text-to-speech, audio search, speaker authentication, and other speech technologies, as well as proper practices to make those technologies fully effective, in the context of the impact of the growth of speech and multimodal interfaces and services on mobile phones, automobiles, and other mobile devices.

Book: Speech in the User Interface: Lessons from Experience

William Meisel (editor), 41 contributors (published 2010)
www.tmaa.com/speechinterfacebook

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