

One app fits all: The FOKUS MEGASTORE enables the preparation of apps for different end-devices

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Berlin, 31. August 2010 - Apps have become an integral component of everyday life. However, so far these applications could only be purchased in manufacturer-specific stores and – as a general rule – used for particular device classes and operating systems. At the IFA 2010 in Berlin, TecWatch Halle 8.1, Fraunhofer FOKUS will, for the first time, demonstrate the functions of the FOKUS MEGASTORE which provides one and the same application for different cell phones, TVs, PCs and other end-devices.

App stores have one thing in common: They differ so fundamentally in configuration, function and capabilities that the users have to familiarize themselves with the structure and functions. Furthermore, they normally support only the end-devices of a particular manufacturer. With the FOKUS MEGASTORE the researchers of Fraunhofer FOKUS (Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems) are introducing a new technology on how applications for such varied end-devices like smart phones, PCs, e-book readers, televisions or entertainment electronics in the vehicle can be provided in a single store.

“So far, app store providers and application suppliers have had to adjust the programming and the update as well as the administration and distribution to the particular store and the corresponding end-device” explains Dr. Stephan Steglich, head of the competence centre Future Applications and Media (FAME) at Fraunhofer FOKUS. “With our principle ‘One platform fits all’ we aim to simplify these processes significantly so that the providers, users and application programmers alike benefit from it. “ The interoperable and standard compliant technology opens new markets for the providers as the apps should in the future be available to smart phones as well as all Internet-enabled devices. In collaboration with researchers of Fraunhofer FOKUS programmers can develop applications which could be used on a variety of end-devices. Last but not least, the user can access the FOKUS MEGASTORE from his cell phone as well as from set-top boxes, TV devices and PCs of various manufacturers in the future.

Cross-platform technology

In developing the FOKUS MEGASTORE the experts used Web based technologies consistent with international Web standards. Steglich emphasizes that, “For example, if a user changes the smart phone manufacturer he also has had to change the purchasing environment and as a rule, buy the application that has already been used before for a second time in the app store of the new device manufacturer”. The providers who sell their applications via the FOKUS MEGASTORE should in future provide the users with the opportunity to use the application across multiple platforms on the end-devices. Thus, the diffusion rate and usage of an application are considerably increased.

Furthermore, in comparison to conventional stores, the FOKUS MEGASTORE is distinguished by its improved functions. For example, apps can be recommended depending on location: When in the office, specific additional office applications are displayed on the recommendation list while during a visit of an unknown city, for instance, city guides or apps for finding recommended restaurants are provided. Also the search for interesting and appropriate applications is considerably more comfortable. Apart from ratings, recommendations and tags the solution of Fraunhofer FOKUS provides the “App Finder”. By means of this function relevant applications are identified based on use intensity of already installed apps.

The FOKUS MEGASTORE can be used to develop new business models. Businesses or institutions can offer specific application bundles and at the same time provide the user with access to other applications.

Fraunhofer FOKUS

The Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems, Fraunhofer FOKUS for short, is a Berlin-based research facility devoted to studying and developing communication and information technologies. In particular, it specializes in multi-domain networks and interoperable, user-centered solutions.

With more than 20 years experience, Fraunhofer FOKUS is an important IT research partner for the telecommunications sector, the automobile industry, media services, and public administrations. It frequently cooperates with governmental agencies and software companies to create need-oriented e-government solutions and is a leading collaborator in projects funded by the European Union as well as by national-level sponsors.

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