Mobile Entertainment: From Ringtones to Apps & Video Streaming Services for Cartoons

The recent collaboration between Neomobile, a global mobile commerce company, and Rainbow, a European and global leader in the production of animated cartoons and feature films, clearly indicates the value today’s market holds for mobile animation. Below we will have a look at the new popular niche: apps and streaming services for animated cartoons and reflect on the evolution and impact cartoons have felt from the mobile entertainment industry.

This article on the emergence of mobile apps and video streaming services of cartoons is also available in Spanish.

Animated Cartoons

Animated cartoons have found a world filled with endless possibilities within the world of mobile technology. Whether it’s a Disney classic or a popular Cartoon Network series, in recent years the mobile world has seen a major boom in apps that give users a new interactive experience full of unique content that goes beyond the mere act of watching a movie or episode in a series.

Disney has recently launched its new app, Disney Movies Anywhere, which gives users a chance to discover, buy and watch movies from Disney, Pixar and Marvel in the comfort of their homes or through their mobile devices such as iPhone, iPad and iTouch. Similarly, after the success seen with iOS users, Cartoon Network launched its famous video game and video app for Android tablets, NOOK and Kindle Fire thereby fortifying strategic collaboration between Barnes & Noble and Amazon last year.

Neomobile and Rainbow

In line with current market trends, we are seeing more companies in the mobile sector that want to work closely with the cartoon animation industry and vice-versa. One example of this can be seen in a collaboration that began last December between Neomobile and Rainbow which produced a video streaming service called Rainbow Toons, a service that has been successfully launched in Spain.

Through this service, mobile device users have, under subscription, full access to cartoon episodes from Rainbow’s most popular series in Spanish, including the adventures of the world-famous
Winx. This service not only proves that this is an important niche emerging in mobile entertainment but also helps us understand how everything has changed since the days when ringtones were the kings of mobile entertainment.

**Fast-paced Change**

Not too long ago, mobile entertainment was limited to ringtones, wallpaper backgrounds and simple mobile games like the legendary *SNAKE* that fed on little points as it moved across a mobile screen. At that time, mobile entertainment was only an accessory in an industry whose income depended almost exclusively on services associated with telephone calls.

However, due to recent technological advances and the emergence of the smartphone (and tablet), we have seen a shift in the mobile entertainment industry. Thanks to these advances, the industry became an ecosystem focused on producing and monetizing entertainment services. Evidence of this ecosystem’s business model can be seen in the exponential development of applications and services.

In a few years, the mobile entertainment industry ceased to be a sector that distributed ringtones and wallpaper, in order to become a more lucrative segment of the mobile world by offering mobile applications and high quality services including games, videos and social tools.

**Impact**

According to figures compiled by Juniper Search, the continued growth of gaming and entertainment products that bring in revenues in the mobile entertainment industry is expected to reach 65 billion in 2016. Similarly, a 2012 study by Millennial Media and comScore says the entertainment industry led purchases of smartphone digital products with a 47 % share of the market. These purchases included a number of products ranging from movies and music to television and digital books.

Several industries in the world of entertainment have benefited from these recent advances in mobile technology. For the TV industry, for example, apps have ended up turning into an essential extension of content. In fact, beyond giving users the ability to watch their favourite programs wherever they are, apps and video streaming services are also tools used to increase user engagement through social networks, unique content & information on the protagonists of a series, surveys, games etc. The same thing has happened in the film industry in regards to apps.
that stream trailers, exclusive clips, and/or interviews they conducted to promote a movie.

The Animation Industry

It is worth mentioning the potential consequence that mobile technology has on the animation industry and consider its magnitude. According to a report by Research and Markets, the global value of the animation industry exceeded 220 billion dollars, thus becoming a key economic pillar in countries like the U.S., Japan and Korea.

More specifically, a final report prepared by the Chinese animation industry estimated that China’s fan-base for anime content reaches 200 million users, and 54.3% of them are interested in accessing them via mobile devices. In fact, it is estimated that at the end of this year, the mobile entertainment market in China will reach $3 billion, a figure that will grow as the penetration of mobile devices increases throughout the country.

Many industry experts say the industry is bound to flourish through devices such as smartphones and tablets. As stated by Terrence Walker Art FX animation studio in Los Angeles, "the future is mobile animation," if you consider the popularity of short animation applications, video streaming services and the huge and growing range of mobile devices worldwide." The demand for content is growing quickly and artists and entertainers who are able to meet that demand will have great success," says Walker.

Consumption Patterns

All this data largely corresponds to a drastic change in current consumption patterns. According to an article published in x cubelabs.com, consumer demand has changed in such a way that today users prefer to access movies or TV shows through a smartphone or tablet. This has led to a new way people discover and view online content, and this is why major films are using apps as an access point that allows users to learn more about the film’s production.

When speaking about the consumption of mobile applications and services for cartoons, it is important to note the way in which today’s children have access to mobile technology. This trend is one of the main reasons for the industry’s success. According to a recent study by Common Sense Media, 72% of children under the age of 8 in the United States have used a mobile device to access content such as movies and games. The same study found that the percentage of children using a mobile device daily grew from 8% in 2011 to 17% in 2013.
Likewise, a study by the New York Times says the ability and speed with which children use tablets and how their fondness of mobile devices has them ignoring their television screens. Because of this, many large companies have created various animated applications that allow children to interact with their favourite characters on mobile devices.

**Unique Content**

As we have seen, mobile entertainment provides an infinite world of possibilities. Within this universe, these applications and mobile services for cartoons have finally become a great tool for monetizing content and strengthening a movie’s or television series’ image.

Above all, having value in the mobile world has to do with how unique users find your content. Unique not only in terms of exclusivity of movies or cartoons offered, but also in the level of interactivity offered. It is important to improve the user experience while at the same time providing personalised content that they can actively interact with. This concept is certainly a trend that will continue to define the mobile entertainment industry for years.