

## A year of magical thinking please



THERE'S an old joke that goes: how do you get a magician to show you 100 cards tricks? Ask him to show you just the one. It's taking the mickey out of magicians, of course, but the truth is we all love a good illusion. And this was amply proved at last

month's Meffy awards night in Cannes when Trixcell's Menny Lindenfeld dazzled the audience with his array of mobile magic tricks from the stage. In the best of the bunch he showed a mobile video of a set of candles burning and then proceeded to extinguish any one chosen by a volunteer just by blowing on the screen.

It seemed to me that the crowd's immense appreciation was not just for the panache of the

**"There's been little genuine novelty in content since the heady early days of the ringtone."**

performance, but also out of sheer gratitude (relief, even) that someone somewhere had come up with a new content

category. Actually, I learned later that Trixcell had been touting its app for at least 18 months. But this was the first time most of the trade had seen it.

The fact is, there's been little genuine novelty in the content business since the heady early days of the ringtone. Sure, games, full-tracks and videos are significant and continue to grow as handsets get more sophisticated and 3G connections proliferate. But none is conceptually made-for-mobile.

Among those concepts that could be described thusly, ringbacks have done well in Far Eastern markets, background tones (they play while the caller is talking, mmm) have done business in India and the video ringback is still in development by Comverse, Vringo and others. The latter remains an intriguing idea, but vendors may struggle to convince a public that doesn't make video calls. Animated 'themes' like those marketed by mobivention are growing in popularity, especially for consumers with Flash-enabled phones. Meanwhile funny little items like Mobile Fun's mobile autographs arouse some curiosity, if not huge sales.

Perhaps I'm being unfair. There may well be loads of developers reading this mag with some novel concepts in development. If so, please get in touch. Maybe one of them could work up an idea recently suggested to me for a clothed pin-up who is reduced to her underwear when the phone is turned upside down – like those 1950s pens. Or maybe Menny Lindenberg could just magic something up.

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# Streamezzo seeks clients for client

## Device portal vendor targets mass market consumer brands with its rich media application

STREAMEZZO believes the future of its rich media client lies with mainstream brands, as the mobile internet goes off-portal.

The French company has developed an on-device app that can deliver video, TV, images and text in one seamless experience. So far, Streamezzo has focused its efforts on operators that can embed such clients into devices before they reach the hands of consumers. However, it's now widening its aim at mass market consumer-facing companies.

"Our vision of the mobile internet is that it will evolve like the fixed line internet, away from ISPs/operators and towards a more open environment," said Streamezzo's CEO Pierre-

Emmanuel Struyven. "But we feel that many brands will demand a richer experience than WAP can deliver and that's where our client can help."

Although Streamezzo works mostly with operators (SFR, Orange Israel, Telstra, Optimus) and device makers, it has already shifted its approach by making its Workbench SDK code open source. This way it makes the authoring process free to brands so that they can develop their own applications, but charge a fee for a server licence.

The company believes the most interest will initially come from mobile TV. "There's no doubt that the best way to present TV on mobile is via a rich media



Struyven: Consumer brands want a 'richer experience' than WAP can deliver

client. You can't do it with a browser," added Struyven. [www.streamezzo.com](http://www.streamezzo.com)

# Zed's day in the sun



Zed's CEO Javier Perez Dolset (left), with Mayor Rita Nolla and Nicholas Negroponte

TECH guru Nicholas Negroponte and Mayor Rita Barbara Nolla of Valencia were the guests of honour at last month's Zed Symposium.

It was Zed's second such event, vastly expanded from the previous year and bringing together over 200

delegates from operators and service providers in 30 countries. It even put on a golf tournament.

Negroponte, chair of the One Laptop Per Child foundation and founder of the influential MIT Lab, used his keynote to address feature pile-up in phones.

"Simplicity is the biggest challenge that handset makers face," he said.

Zed has emerged as arguably the world's most successful D2C brand by focusing on community services. It earned \$545 million in 2007.

[www.zed.com](http://www.zed.com)

## PayforIT Online (Dialogue)

**Available:** Out Now

UK WAP billing platform PayforIT is going to the wired web thanks to Dialogue Communications.

PayforIT allows consumers to pay for content, goods or services up to the value of £10 via their mobile. Now, online purchases can be paid in the same way.

Dialogue believes PayforIT online will be used initially by mobile content providers for sales via their websites, but ultimately for all merchants to sell CDs, DVDs, flowers and books, etc.

Guiom Peersman, MD of Dialogue, explains: "PayforIT on the internet will work very much in the same way as it does on mobile, with consumers seeing standard PayforIT payment pages across all purchases regardless of merchant.

PayforIT was launched over a year ago by all UK operators on mobile, with the aim of building consumer confidence.

[www.dialogue.co.uk](http://www.dialogue.co.uk)



**IN A NUTSHELL:** Enables consumers to buy small ticket items on the web using their phone as the payment mechanism.

## Magic Tricks (Trixcell)

**Available:** Coming Soon

Magic tricks on mobile? Can this be the first genuinely new content category for years?

The content community was wowed at the Meffy awards last month by a performance from Menny Lindenfeld, co-founder of Trixcell, which claims to be the world's first mobile magic specialist. The Israeli company used his act as its official launch stunt.

Lindenfeld demonstrated a mobile app, in which he showed five lit candles on a mobile screen and then 'blew' out any one chosen by a volunteer.

This was one of four very impressive tricks performed. The company is developing a repertoire of tricks with inventors of professional close-up magic and illusions. Now Trixcell plans to roll out these downloadable apps across operators and portals.

[www.trixcell.com](http://www.trixcell.com)

**IN A NUTSHELL:** Impress friends down the pub by using a phone to saw a woman in half.



We take content extremely seriously in Mobile Entertainment. But not here...

# (Dis)content

Regular ME readers will have noticed the rise and rise of Spain's Zed in recent months. With its amazing financials and highly visible marketing campaigns it is now a veritable giant. However, the stature of its marketing director **Miguel Lopez-Quesada** has headed in the opposite direction. He's no giant. Not any more. Not after shedding dozens of pounds in the last 12 months. Perhaps he should get together with mobile's former diet champ Ted Cohen and compare trousers... Miguel is, of course, a new board member of the MEF, whose MEM show proved fertile ground for Discontent. Nokia's Kamar Shah was his usually quiet self, but he did remark that he texted Slash the other day. Kamar's 'no big deal' demeanour was undermined when he went on the say "fuck me, the bugger texted me back!"... MEM was considerably enlivened by the appearance of Trixcell's Menny Lindenfeld at the Meffys. He performed some superb mobile magic tricks on stage. But Menny's volunteer MCN's Stephen Burke got the biggest laugh. When Menny gave him a euro he'd produced from thin air, Steve said "keep it, you're the start-up". The other Meffys surprise was Orange's Neil Holroyd grabbing the

peachy behind of hostess Suzi Perry. Those of you that know Neil will realise there was nothing remotely sexual in the manoeuvre... Neil was among the competitors at VGM's go-karting event to launch *Crash Nitro Kart*. But he couldn't live with ME's own Tom Roberts, who murdered the competition. The proud Welshman then disgraced himself on the podium by admitting he didn't know the words of the Welsh national anthem... Finally, thanks to an ME reader called Pat who submitted this magnificent response to our web story that Softbank is about to launch a robot phone, with detachable arms and legs: "I'd love one, but the US carriers will be disabling the left leg option and the right arm will be replaced with just a stub."

*From top: Zed's slimline Miguel; Kamar's mate Slash; Trixcell's incendiary Menny; ME's plastic taffy Tom Roberts*



## FAVOURITES

▶ **Dave Waldman, head of biz dev, Twistbox/Waat**



**What's your current handset?**  
Blackberry Curve

**Which handset do you want next?**  
iPhone

**Current ringtone?**  
Charlie Brown's Theme Song

**Bookmarked mobile internet sites?**  
Google, Viigo (it's a java app)

**What will be the next big thing in mobile content?**

I think video will drive the space. And I also see a lot of smaller technology firms creating compelling social networking features.

**What's all hype and no substance?**

There's a lot of hype out there but I'm an awful psychic.

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*Mobile Entertainment* is published 12 times a year by Intent Media - Saxon House, 6A St. Andrew Street, Hertford, Herts SG14 1JA, England

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Total average monthly net circulation per issue for January 1st 2007 to December 31st 2007 was 8,012.



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Intent Media is a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation and the Periodical Publishers Association

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