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SCOTLAND on SUNDAY

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Cold shoulder for queues

CHRISTOPHER CLAIRE

THE days of queuing overnight in the freezing cold to snap up prized concert tickets may soon be over.

Mobile phone users will be able to get concert tickets texted to them in a trial of a revolutionary new booking system launched yesterday.

The ticketless booking system, which will be tested for the first time in the UK ahead of a Primal Scream gig in Edinburgh next month, is tipped to cut queues for concert tickets and take ticket touts off the street.

Backers of the "m-ticket" are already promising the system could represent the future of ticket booking across the UK.

Instead of joining hundreds of other fans in queues, fans of Primal Scream will be texted virtual tickets bought online, and have their mobile phones scanned by ticket attendants on the night to gain entry.

The system is the brainchild of mobile technology specialist Mobiqa and e-commerce company MercuryTide. The firms have chosen the Primal Scream concert at Edinburgh's Corn Exchange on December 16 as the guinea pig for the trial.

If it is successful, both firms have promised to take the system across the UK.

Fans wishing to attend the Primal Scream gig will be able to log on to a website and request and pay for tickets to the concert. The virtual ticket will then be picture-texted instantly to their mobile phone in the form of a barcode.

The bar code will contain all the essential details of the concert including details of the band, venue and start time.

Concert-goers will save the message and then turn up on the night, where door staff will be able to scan the ticket barcode on the mobile phone in a matter of seconds.

Yesterday, the backers of the technology were confident the trial would work.

Ronnie Forbes, director of Mobiqa, said: "We are using the Primal Scream concert as a trial, but the outcome, I'm sure, will show gig-goers how they could potentially use a mobile phone to purchase and store tickets, and get into concerts using Mobiqa's m-ticket technology.

"I'm sure this method of purchase will become standard as mobile phones

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are pretty well ubiquitous in the UK."