

Sunday Herald - 12 February 2006

## Scots mobile tech firms hope Barcelona's 3GSM conference will ring the changes

By Steven Vass, Media Correspondent

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SCOTTISH mobile technology companies are hoping to get the world talking when they unveil a raft of new products at the 3GSM conference in Barcelona tomorrow.

A total of 24 companies, with interests in everything from mobile games to data storage, will double the number that went to last year's event. Big names include the semiconductor company Wolfson Microelectronics and mobile barcode specialist, Mobiqua.

Jim Black, marketing manager for industry association MX Alliance, said the four-day conference, which is the world's biggest for mobile technology, would showcase the strength of the Scottish mobile industry.

"The quality of the technology coming out of Scotland is on a par with - and even exceeding - places like Asia, the Nordic countries and Cambridge. Perhaps we have just not been as good at telling people," he said.

In an effort to change this, overseas trade agency Scottish Development International (SDI) has been helping to drive Scotland's strong attendance by offering subsidies.

SDI will push Scottish achievements by giving its conference pavillion a tartan theme. This will include whisky tasting, a piper and even a competition to win a romantic weekend away in a Scottish castle.

Black said that among the companies launching products, he was particularly impressed with Dunfermline-based Trisent Communications, which is one of two Scottish companies launching a new mobile phone positioning system.

Tri-locator is a product for providers who offer positioning to businesses who want to track the locations of vehicles and people. Providers are being asked to buy access to the Tri-locator software and data signals so that they can put their own services on top, such as working out the nearest vehicle to a destination or the number of people in a given area.

Tri-locator, which received £300,000 of venture capital funding from Edinburgh's Sigma Technology Management, is a cheaper alternative to either a global satellite positioning system (GPS) or the existing type of mobile phone positioning (cell-ID). Unlike GPS, there is also no need to pay for satellite antennae on vehicles.

"It should shake up the GPS track- ing market," said Trisent managing director Gordon Povey, adding that the positioning market could be worth "tens of millions" with this sort of cheaper system.

Tri-locator has already been trialled by three service providers, including Milton Keynes-based FollowUs, which markets positioning systems to everyone from trucking companies to local authorities who need to keep track of employees. FollowUs now plans to offer Tri-locator-based services as an alternative to ones that use GPS.

Povey also plans to use the 3GSM conference to meet technology companies from countries such as Germany and Ireland to look at forming partnerships to launch Tri-locator beyond the UK.

Another company using Barcelona to tout a new mobile positioning product is Glasgow's Stream Communications. Its new system improves on existing cell-ID products with a new generation of technology that offers more accurate positioning also at a cheaper cost.

Stream also wants to draw attention to a new SIM card which reduces the cost of making phone calls between European countries. It is aimed at the growing machine-to-machine sector, where mobile calls can be used to monitor everything from the amount of stock in a drinks dispenser to the quantity of a type of cargo on a ship.

A third company launching products at 3GSM is Aspects Software, which is based in Edinburgh. Its new Smart- Station 3S tool is a smaller version of an existing product for testing SIM cards for faults.

Aspects marketing manager Colin Gough said that the new product is nearly half the height of the company's existing systems, which already attract customers such as Motorola, Orange and O2. It also has various new features to make testing easier.

"We hope to meet existing customers and meet some new ones at the conference," he said.

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