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- International
- Sport
- Business
- Politics
- Education
- Health
- Environment
- Transport
- Entertainment
- Technology
- Opinion
- Video archive
- Crossword
- Article Index

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- Features
- Back Issues
- Supplements

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- Heritage & Culture
- Living
- Dating
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Going mobile to kick out Hogmanay touts

By MICHAEL BLACKLEY

TICKETS for Edinburgh's Hogmanay would be texted to the buyer's mobile phone under new plans to stamp out touts.

An Edinburgh-based company has won contracts in 35 countries across the world for its innovative mobile ticketing technology, which texts a non-transferable barcode to mobile phones.



LITTLE WONDER: Don Cameron with an example of a Hogmanay ticket sent by text

Now the city's festivals and events champion, Councillor Steve Cardownie, wants to see if the technology can help stamp out touts.

Guns N' Roses' performance at London's Hammersmith Apollo in 2006 was the first rock concert in the UK to feature the mobile ticketing technology, created by Mobiqa, which is based in George Street.

The technology has since been used at the O2 Wireless Festival, as well as at airlines, cinemas and train stations across the world.

Cllr Cardownie said: "Anything that can help restrict parasitic ticket touts has to be considered because people are being ripped off by those who sell tickets to the highest bidder and prey on the loyalty of fans."

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"New technology that can eradicate that has to be looked at closely. If it has worked well on the continent, we would certainly consider using it here." After the barcode is texted to the ticket buyer, he takes it on his mobile to the event. The mobile is then scanned to read the barcode. If the message is forwarded on, the ticket becomes invalid.

Clr Cardownie said he was keen to meet with Mobiqa to discuss how it could help cut ticket touting at city events like the Winter Festivals. A number of the city's top events have been targeted by touts in the past. Tickets for last year's Tattoo, which sold out within six weeks of going on sale, were sold on eBay for vastly inflated prices.

Around 500 sets of tickets for last year's glamour World Cup showdown between Scotland and the All Blacks were touted for up to 200 per cent of face value.

Tickets to last year's Hogmanay appeared on eBay before the event had even sold out – with one seller misleadingly stating that street party passes were for the music concert headlined by Kasabian.

Mobiqa, which has trialled its technology at Murrayfield Stadium's Party on the Pitch last year, has won contracts around the world, including the Washington Nationals Major League Baseball side and Thai airline Nok Air.

The firm held a workshop with business and tourism leaders from the Capital at the Edinburgh tourism action group conference at Murrayfield Stadium yesterday.

Don Cameron of Mobiqa said: "Any live concerts would be of interest to us, whether large-scale events or one-off gigs."

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