



# ExperienceLab

## Design guidelines | Mobile TV

Lucy Stockbridge  
May 2006

Email: [lucy.stockbridge@serco.com](mailto:lucy.stockbridge@serco.com)  
Tel: 020 7421 6482

## Summary

Mobile TV trials around the world are revealing the popularity and potential for mobile TV technology. Many users have expressed a desire to access entertainment on the move whether to keep up to date with favourite programmes or breaking news, to participate in interactive shows or simply to pass the time. Although best practice for digital TV, mobile phones and WAP/GPRS is well established, integrating TV functionality into a mobile phone introduces a number of unique usability challenges.

Serco ExperienceLab has been investigating how users react to this first generation of mobile television products through a series of independent research studies. The findings of the studies have helped to inform this set of design guidelines. These guidelines are by no means definitive and are provided simply as an indication of what can be learned through a user centred approach. In addition to these guidelines we also offer a mobile TV workshop and a more detailed presentation. For more information, please contact [info@experience-lab.co.uk](mailto:info@experience-lab.co.uk).

## Design guidelines

### Meeting users expectations of mobile TV content and realising future opportunities

- Offer downloadable or 'on demand' content such as football highlights, 30 minute sit-coms and movies as these are expected and desired by users. Downloading content via a PC (in a similar way to podcasting) should also be considered.
- Programmes without fixed start and end times such as News 24, Sky Sports News and MTV may be most popular 'real-time' streamed or broadcast content.
- Prioritise the provision of standard TV content rather than producing shorter programmes for mobile TV.
- All video content should be provided through a single 'Mobile TV' area with 'real-time' channels separated from downloadable or 'on demand' content. The structure of this area should be tested with users.
- The term 'streaming' should either be avoided or made more familiar through marketing activities.
- Explore the opportunities and user requirements for 'interactive' TV using a combination of TV, calling/messaging, gaming, camera and mobile internet facilities.

### Helping users to access mobile TV

- If possible, provide a clear and prominent link to mobile TV within the main menu of the mobile phone, as this is where users expect it.
- If access is to be provided through the Internet, a clear separate 'Mobile TV' option should be provided within the mobile internet main menu. Advertising and signposting should also be used to educate users that this is where they access mobile TV.

- Users wanted to quickly and easily access the mobile TV service on their phone. One possibility could be to allow a 'soft-key' to be programmed to provide direct access.

## Browsing programmes and channels

- Solutions for showing channel and programme listings need to be tested further with users, no definitive solution has yet emerged. Consider:
  - 2D grid of channel icons;
  - Tabulated EPG (similar to many digital TV EPGs);
  - List of channels – with 'now and next' programme information available by default or through an additional page.
- Either list all channels or, if grouped, show all group titles without scrolling.
- Carefully consider and test the order channels are listed, place the most popular mobile TV channels at the top to reduce the need for scrolling.
- If possible, allow users to re-order the channel listings or specify their favourite channels.
- The name and timings of the current programme showing on each channel and the next programme should be provided.
- Full programme listings for a selected channel are expected but likely to be accessed infrequently.
- Upon channel selection, the channel should load and play and an alternative method for viewing all programmes for that day on the channel should be provided (e.g. with tabs).
- Ensure that it is clear where scrolling is necessary e.g. by showing half of the next line of text or using a hanging arrow.
- Avoid advertising at the top of pages as this increases the need for scrolling and can be misinterpreted as representing all the content on the page.
- When mobile TV is accessed through mobile internet ensure links effectively communicate whether they link to video or textual content (e.g. 'news headlines (video)' and 'news headlines (text)').

## Watching mobile TV

- Avoid interruptions to or loss of quality of live broadcast whenever possible. When interruptions occur ensure, where possible, that audio is not lost so that users can still hear the programme.
- Reassure users about the time remaining for mobile TV to load/buffer by providing a visual indicator (e.g. loading bar).
- Avoid obstructing TV screen space by using transparent menus and icons (e.g. battery life) and collapsible soft-key menu options.
- Provide an option to show video at 90 degrees to normal phone orientation (e.g. horizontal widescreen) to provide a larger viewing area.

- If possible, provide functionality to browse 'now and next' channels and programmes while watching mobile TV, resembling the 'mini-guide' on digital TV. Ensure this mini-guide appears for a few seconds on entering the channel and the means of accessing it when not on screen is clear.
- Provide a clear way of adjusting the channel without going 'back' and a method of adjusting the volume.

## Integration with phone services

- Ensure that users are alerted to incoming calls while watching mobile TV. If possible, identify the caller.
- If possible, the mobile TV content should be paused/stopped for the duration of the call and the user should be provided with the choice to resume once the call is finished.
- Ensure that users are alerted when text messages arrive while watching mobile TV. The sender should be identified and an option to view provided.
- When viewing the text message either the TV audio should continue or TV should be paused/stopped and resumed once the message has been read.

## Dealing with users' mobile TV concerns

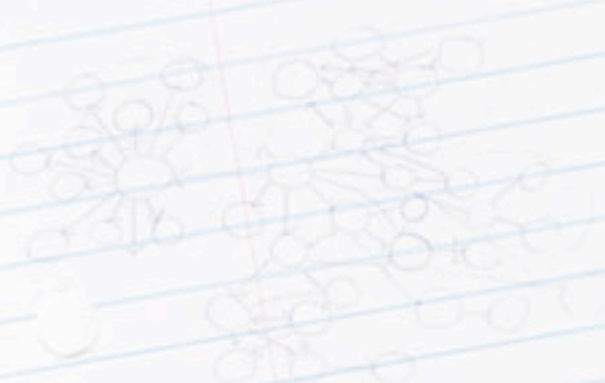
- Provide clear pricing models (e.g. monthly payments, per download cost). Any additional cost of connecting to the Internet to watch mobile TV should also be clear.
- Set accurate user expectations about the quality of the picture and the connection and the drain on battery life when viewing 'live' broadcast mobile TV.
- Allow users to use standard headset jacks on the mobile device for more flexibility.
- Provide easy access to simple, contextual help in order to educate users on how to use mobile TV.

### *About ExperienceLab*

ExperienceLab (formerly Serco Usability Services), are a global experience design research agency. They help organisations optimise their customer experiences, from web to TV and mobile, from advertising to physical environments. They've been doing this for a while, pretty much since the first computers and networks were created, so they know a thing or two about how to make people, processes and technologies work in harmony.

ExperienceLab use a wide range of techniques to tailor a research solution that fits your business objective, including ideation sessions, proposition analysis, customer needs mapping, usability testing, benchmarking and touch point integration studies. As a co-founder of the UXalliance we also provide research on a global scale.

Why not visit the ExperienceLab blog ([www.experiencelab.info](http://www.experiencelab.info)), which features the latest thinking on experience design issues.



**Serco ExperienceLab**

22 Hand Court

London

WC1V 6JF

+44 (0)20 7421 6499

[info@experience-lab.co.uk](mailto:info@experience-lab.co.uk)

[www.serco.com/expericnelab](http://www.serco.com/expericnelab)

ExperienceLab is part of the International Serco Group of companies.

