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Microsoft and Omnifone Team Up to Enable Next-Generation Mobile Entertainment Services - Omnifone plans to deploy Microsoft PlayReady technology for its MusicStation mobile music subscription service

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PRNewswire-FirstCall -- Today at Mobile World Congress 2008 Omnifone Ltd. and Microsoft Corp. announced a collaborative effort to deliver next-generation digital music services to consumers through the deployment of Microsoft PlayReady content-access technology in MusicStation, Omnifone's award-winning unlimited mobile music service. MusicStation is already distributed to consumers in partnership with major mobile operators that include Vodafone Group plc, Telenor ASA, Hutchison Telecom and Vodacom. With the adoption of PlayReady technology, Omnifone expects to enable these and future MusicStation users to more seamlessly transfer this music experience between their mobile phone and Windows-based PC. Omnifone's deployment of PlayReady technology is expected to take place in the second half of 2008. Omnifone will then utilize the ability of PlayReady to support many additional content types to offer new entertainment scenarios.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20000822/MSFTLOGO>)

First unveiled in February 2007, PlayReady is a content-access technology from Microsoft that enables content owners and service providers to deliver virtually any type of digital content, using a wide range of business models. PlayReady also provides significant improvements in ease of use for consumers who want to access, manage and back up protected content.

"We are pleased to work with Microsoft and use PlayReady to further enhance the ever-popular MusicStation experience," said Rob Lewis, chief executive officer of Omnifone. "Together with Microsoft, we aim to offer consumers the freedom to download, play and share whatever music they want, wherever they are, on whatever PlayReady-enabled phone or personal computer they have in front of them."

"The incorporation of PlayReady into Omnifone's MusicStation service will enable compelling new mobile entertainment scenarios featuring seamless content access and transfer," said Chadd Knowlton, general manager of the Content Access and Protection Group at Microsoft. "Omnifone is a pioneering leader in the field of mobile entertainment, with significant momentum behind its MusicStation service. Our collaboration will build on this success to help ensure that mobile entertainment delivers on its promise of convenience, immediacy and high-quality experiences."

specific focus on meeting the needs of mobile operators, service providers and device manufacturers. The technology supports a range of business models that can be applied to almost any type of digital content (music, video, games, ringtones, images and more) and a wide range of audio and video formats (including AAC, AAC+, Enhanced AAC+, H.264, Windows Media Audio (WMA) and Windows Media Video (WMV)). PlayReady also provides features such as service domains and embedded licenses specifically designed to make it easy for consumers to enjoy content on all their registered devices, and back up their content just as easily as they would for any other type of file.

Microsoft released the PlayReady Client Porting Kit for mobile devices in August 2007 and expects the first services using Microsoft PlayReady technology to appear in the second half of 2008. In addition, Microsoft has designed PlayReady to be compatible with Windows Media DRM 10, which means that devices supporting PlayReady can access existing Windows Media DRM-based content as well as new PlayReady content services.

About Omnifone

Omnifone is Europe's leading direct to mobile unlimited music download service provider. Partners include the likes of Vodafone, Telenor, 3 Hong Kong and Vodacom, all of whom have rolled out Omnifone's MusicStation service. Over 25 other operators have engaged as partners. In 2007 Omnifone won the Mobile Entertainment Forum (MEF) Music Service Award, Red Herring EMEA & Global 100 Awards, and in 2008, the Juniper Research Future Mobile Award's Gold Award for Mobile Music. The company is based at Island Studios, London with regional HQs in Asia Pacific. For further information please visit; www.omnifone.com.

About MusicStation

MusicStation is an unlimited music download service that will run on virtually all 2.5G/3G/HSDPA music compatible mobiles. MusicStation provides a virtually identical next generation community based user experience across all manufacturer handsets. Built-in networked functions provide the ability to make friends, build and share playlists and individual tracks with other mobile users and receive music news and recommendations based on player behaviour using collaborative filtering and nearest neighbour technology.

MusicStation stores downloaded tracks on the phone's internal or removable memory and these are fully backed up so that if a user's mobile is stolen, lost or upgraded, the replacement handset will automatically restore the customer's music, playlists, friends and preferences to the replacement handset. MusicStation users can listen to downloaded tracks when in Flight Safe mode and have unlimited access to the full catalogue when connected to a 2.5G/3G/HSDPA network.

About Microsoft

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