The future of mobile search is social

Karen Church, Telefonica Research
Barcelona, Spain

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Mobile phones are “personal”
Context impacts on mobile information needs
Mobile users tend to seek “fresh” content
Social beings: seek new ways to interact
Where is the nearest florist?
Where is that really cool cocktail bar I went to last month?
Search engines don’t always hold the answer
Sometimes our friends, family or other people are in a better position to help us
Can we improve the search and discovery experience of mobile users by providing a readily available connection to their social network?
Social Search Browser (SSB)

- Proactively displays the queries and interactions of other users in a given location
- Provide an enriched *sense of place*
- Encourages discovery of new, interesting content
- Incorporates social networking capabilities with key mobile contexts: allows friends to answer your queries while on-the-move
SSB1: Initial incarnation!

- iPhone optimized web-application
- When launched it centers on the users current physical location
- Displays all queries/questions posted by other users in that location
- As users pan/zoom the set of queries is updated
- Users can post new queries or interact with queries of others
SSB2: focus on interfaces for LBS
Query details

- Full query details
- Answers
- Local search results from Google Local Search API
- Event search listings from Eventful API
Live field studies *in-the-wild*
01

APR 2009, 16 USERS, 1 WEEK, IRELAND
SEPT 2009, 34 USERS, 1 MONTH, IRELAND
Proactive UI enables discovery of content!
A tool for helping and sharing.....
A tool for supporting curiosity
extension to my social network
Current research focus

- Nature of mobile information needs:
  - Goal: understand exactly how important social is to mobile information needs
- Evolving snapshots of mobile search behaviour
  - Portal-based search and information access
  - Indicators of evolution: query variation, diversity, topics, etc.
- Social Search Browser 3 – beyond LBS
Future research focus

- We need to continue learning about the dynamic behaviours of mobile users
  - Transaction log analysis, live field studies
- Novel mobile search and mobile information access prototypes
  - Beyond location-based services
  - Utilizing mobile social networks
  - New search interfaces/interaction paradigms
  - Emerging markets
Thank You!

Karen Church
www.karenchurch.com
karen@tid.es
@karenchurch

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