Apps and Gadgets for ASEAN Community

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Abstract - Apps or Application Software packages for mobile devices are gaining more and more popularity. For example, the number of Apps in Apple Apps Store has reached more than one million at the beginning of the year 2014. Definitely, Apps will be required for ASEAN Community which will be operational in the year 2015. This paper presents introduction to Apps which started in the year 2008. An App is an application software which can be conveniently activated by touching only one icon on the screen of the phone; types of Apps; followed by sample Apps training in Myanmar and Apps contest in Thailand, four examples of Apps, namely, "CeeMeAgain App", "Zodio App", "ask.fm App" and "KKBOX App"; then introduction to IT-related gadgets and four examples, namely, "Google Glass" which is one of the most well-known wearable gadgets, "Wellograph" which is a smart wrist watch from Thailand, "Jawbone" which is one of the best wrist band for health also from Thailand, and then "mRobo" which is a singing and dancing robot from TOSY Robotics from Vietnam.

Keywords - Apps, Gadgets, Apps and Gadgets for ASEAN

1. INTRODUCTION

From Wikipedia [1], development of the iPhone started in the year 2004. Apple Inc. released the first-generation iPhone on 29 June 2007, and the seventh generation (iPhone 5C, and iPhone 5S) on 10 September 2013. From 2007 to 2011, Apple Inc. spent US$ 647 million for advertising for iPhone in the US. Apple has sold more than 250 million units of iPhone. From "techcrunch.com" on 13 February 2014, Gartner reported that the number of smart phone sold to end users in 2013 was 968 million out of 1.8 billion mobiles sold [2].

One of the important differences of iPhone from other mobile phones is that iPhone does not have a physical keyboard. Activation of services such phone call, email, calendar, and etc. is done by touching an icon on the screen. For example, the user just touches the icon with the picture of the phone handset to use the phone service, touch the icon with the picture of an envelope to use email, and etc. What is behind each icon is an application software or an "app".

From Wikipedia, it may be said that the right of an adequate standard of living consists of five items, namely, food, clothing, housing, medical care, and social services [3].
Nowadays, there are a lot of people who would claim that they need a smart phone. The authors of this paper agree that if they found out that they have just left their residences without their smart phones, they would turn back to their residences to get the smart phones. They could not live the whole day without their smart phones.

2. APPS IN ASEAN

The number of apps are increasing very rapidly. Many Apps Stores have been launched, namely, App Store on 10 July 2008, Android Market on 22 October 2008, Blackberry App World on 1 April 2009, OVI Store on 26 May 2009 [4, 5, 6]. The download statistics are also very interesting, e.g. one billionth iPhone App was downloaded on 23 April 2009, one million downloads per day of Blackberry App World was reached on 30 July 2010, six million downloads per day was reached by Ovi Store on 23 June 2011, and 20 billion apps were downloaded at App Store in the year 2012. Also, from <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/iOS_App_Store>, as of April 23, 2014, the number of available Apps is over 1 million, the number of downloads over 70,000 billions, and the average number of download per App is 50,000.

In terms of downloading of Apps in the world, Thailand ranks 14th on iOS, and 15th on Android Play Store. Considering only in Asia, Thailand ranked 4th, i.e. behind only China, Japan, and Korea.

Four examples of Apps will be presented in this Section, namely, "CeeMeAgain App", "Zodio App", "ask.fm App", and "KKBOX App".

The first example is "CeeMeAgain App" started 31 May 2011 by the Admin of www.ceefanclub.com [7]. This app provides latest news and updates about the first author of this paper; her profile, portfolio, website, and slide show with online photo; gallery and clip video update every day; and information about her from Facebook, twitter and YouTube.

The second example is "Zodio App" [8, 9] for checking-in, uploading photos, and recommending places such as restaurants, bars, shops, salons, spas, and etc. It was copyrighted by 2012 Zodio.com Limited and available free of charge in Thai, Indonesian, Japanese, and English.

The third example is "ask.fm App" [10, 11, 12] for anyone to post a question either anonymously or with his name. To create his profile, a user must be at least 13 years old. The system will send to every user "question of the day" and any user can click for random question. If the user answers a question, both the question and answer will appear in his profile. A user can delete any question or answer on his profile. In August 2013, Ask.fm reached 70 million registered users with more than 30 million questions and answers created daily.

The fourth example is "KKBOX App", for song lovers [13, 14, 15]. KKBOX offers over 10 million songs from over 500 major and local music labels and publishers. The service is available in three ASEAN countries, namely, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. KKBOX started in Taiwan in 2004 then aggressively expanding to ASEAN market.

3. SAMPLE APPS TRAINING IN MYANMAR AND APPS CONTEST IN THAILAND

From 22 January to 5 May 2014, Samsung Tech Institute Mobile Academy sponsored a project called "Android Mobile App Training Course" at the University of Computer Studies, Yangon (UCSY), Myanmar [16]. The Director of the Project was an App Expert from Thailand named "Dr. Pilastpong Subsermsri" who has impressive IT experience, such as being an Advisor of the Telecommunications Committee at the Royal Thai Parliament, a member of the IT Board of the Ministry of Justice of Thailand, and etc.
Dr. Pilastpong is a very good friend of Prof. Charmonman from the time they worked together at Computer Union Company where H.E. Anand Panyarachun (a former Prime Minister of Thailand) was the Chairman, H.E. Amnuay Verawan (a former Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand) was the Deputy Chairman, Prof. Charmonman was a Director, and Dr. Pilastpong was the Manager.

There were 18 trainees, all from UCSY. They were 3 Ph.D. students, 10 Master degree students, and 5 instructors. Nine Apps were produced by 9 teams of trainees, each with 2 members.

The Google Developer Group (GDG) with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of ICT, and Google organized "One Tablet Per Child (OTPC) App Hackathon" [17]. The main purpose is to create more apps to encourage students to do self-learning, to increase proficiency in literacy and communication, and to bridge the technology gap. The two-day event was held in Bangkok and Khon Kaen. The winners were third-year students from Rajamangala University of Technology in Tak.

4. GADGETS IN ASEAN

The word "gadget" was first used in the 19th century for a technical item [18]. There was a story that the word was invented when a company named "Gadget, Gauthier & Cie" made a small-scale version of the Statue of Liberty and named it after the first part of the name of company, i.e. "Gadget". A gadget may be hardware or software. The first author of this paper also host her 168hrs TV "Cee with Gadgets". Four examples of IT-related hardware gadgets will be presented in the Section. They are "Google Glasses", "Wellograph", "Jawbone", and "mRobo".

The first example is "Google Glass" [19, 20]. Figure 1 shows the authors wearing Google Glass. The Glass has a touchpad for the wearer to control the gadget by using his finger to swipe through a timeline-like interface displayed on the screen. Sliding forward shows past events such as phone calls, photos, etc. Sliding backward shows current event such as weather. Google Glass can take photos and record video.

The second example is "Wellograph" [21]. Wellograph is a wearable gadget from Thailand which won the best design award from CES 2014. This intelligent wristwatch can follow the activities of the user and monitor his heart rate as well as indicating how much the user is exercising.

The third example is "Jawbone" [22] which is one of the best fitness trackers. Jawbone is easy to slap on the user's wrist. It records how many steps the user takes each day, how many hours the user sleeps at night as well as calories and nutrition information from meals the user takes.

The fourth example is "mRobo" [23] which is a dancing and singing robot from TOSY Robotics from Vietnam. This gadget was voted Best Product of CES 2012 by the Washington Post and Huffington Post. The gadget was unveiled at CES 2012 with Justin Bieber. It can sing and dance, and serve as a good partner for the user.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

With mobile phones becoming one of the necessities of life, two important associated tools have appeared, i.e. Apps and Gadgets. An app is an application software package with icon on the screen of mobile phones. A gadget may be hardware or software for use...
usually with a mobile phone. This paper presents the concept of Apps with four examples, namely, "CeeMeAgain App", "Zodio App", "ask.fm App" and "KKBOX App"; followed by the concept of gadget with four examples, namely, Google Glass, Wellograph, Jawbone, and mRobo. More and more apps and gadgets are announced from time to time. So, everybody should follow the news from the Internet and select new apps and gadgets for the benefits of all concerned.

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(Arranged in the order of citation in the same fashion as the case of Footnotes.)

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