

# Can Smart Pipes Be a Little Smarter?

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## Is Telco 2.0 a Real Thing?

Some IT-technology-aware people, when they first time learn of Telco 2.0 and Web Services think this is yet another way of doing simple things in more complicated way. Question arises why Short Messages (SMS) from applications should be sent over HTTP instead of using native SMSC protocol? Why to transmit several kilobytes for a message which conveys 140 characters of information?

There are simple answers (security, openness, low cost of bandwidth, easy management of HTTP traffic) but also additional added value has to be sought if a professional or a businessman is considering investing his/hers time and money.

## Follow the Best

The two following cases can be presented as the perfect examples how web technology should be delivered directly to the people who are making the best use of it. Should telco operators find the way to follow them, they will have a chance to rise from being a bit-pipe to info/service-pipe and maybe even cut out some middlemen disrupting their business.

The example where web technology (especially Web Services) brought a real added value to professional individuals was development of a Web Map Service (WMS). WMS is a standard protocol (based on HTTP) for requesting and delivering geographical information in a form of map images. It is supported by nearly all commercial and free GIS software packages. It enables its users to add data from many sources in the Internet in a very easy but controlled way without doing more than pasting one URL and choosing configuration options with couple of mouse clicks. At the same time, WMS ensures that information owner fully controls to whom, how, with what level of accuracy, and for what fee geographical information is delivered.

Which software is 'free & priceless' at the same time? WordPress is. This is a quote from a homepage of this fantastic opensource CMS used worldwide by more than 60M blogosphere inhabitants. Beautiful web pages can be created without knowledge of HTML, PHP or JavaScript. For administrators it offers seamless updates, easy user management, and sufficient level of security and spam protection. It can be enriched with a selection of plugins which are developed by dedicated community members. What is the most impressive, majority of tasks are performed with a mouse click or through user-friendly web forms.

### **Skip 2.0 build 2.1**

Inspired by WordPress' end user experience (and by WMS' flexibility and ease of use) we are ready to look for the best way to proceed. The first step which telco operators can make is to develop a WordPress (or any other CMS) plugin enabling web page owners to seamlessly integrate telco functionalities to their sites. Possible use cases include, but are not limited to: simple SMS/MMS sending, authorization through SMS, USSD dialogs, and presenting location-relevant content. In this case location can be based not on the IP location technologies (which often give poor results) but on the mobile terminal location provided by the telco operator.

Dedicated plugins can be prepared for business users: micro payments, voting, SMS auctions, and many more. Plugin hides the API from the end user. No need to write a PHP or Java Script code.

Is skipping APIs and giving CMS plugins to end users a better offer for them? Let end users decide by voting with their fingers on keyboards and by using or not using them. As an encouragement for everybody this approach may be named Telco 2.1 to mark this small step toward all who are experts in their fields but not necessarily in web programming.

### **Want some money?**

Money makes this world go round. In the Internet it is mostly in small quantities but connected to simple actions performed many times. Does user expect service for free? It is available but with an advertisement which is hopefully not totally irrelevant for him.

For every blog owner, telco operator can offer possibility to send (via MMS) digests (with pictures!) of new articles to the registered users. It can be ad-free (if the blog owner pays a flat fee or on per event basis) or it can be free for the blog owner but include some advertisement

from the telco operator. As every blog article is tagged with keywords, it is easy to pick an ad which would not be annoying for the blog readers and thematically connected to the content of the article. The blog owner can be financially rewarded for every message with an ad which was delivered or read.

It will be interesting to see how this domain will develop.

### TLAs Used:

TLA – Three-Letter Acronym    GIS – Geographical Information System    WMS – Web Map Service  
SMS – Short Message Service

MMS – Multimedia Message Service

CMS – Content Management System

URL – Uniform Resource Locator

HTTP – Hypertext Transfer Protocol

USSD – Unstructured Supplementary Service Data

IP – Internet Protocol

HTML – Hypertext Markup Language

PHP – PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor

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