

Things Once Imagined Are Becoming Possibilities



By Ron Whaley
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"Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" Who would have believed back when the fairy tale *Snow White* was written that one day we really would have mirrors that could talk to us and even do things for us? And yet, with the growth and spread of the Internet of Things (IoT), that's exactly what's happening. Just examine the Amazon Echo Look, released earlier this year that can actually take pictures of your clothing, help catalog your clothes and rate what looks best on you using a specific algorithm. Fairy tales are becoming real.

New research reveals that 95 percent of U.S. adults own a cellphone while 78 percent own a computer.¹ Additionally, today, one in ten American adults are "smartphone-only" internet users, who primarily use their smartphones as their main way to go online.²

As of March 2017, there were 2.8 million apps available to Android users and Apple's App Store offered 2.2 million apps.³ Research informs us that consumers prefer mobile apps to mobile sites. In fact, 90 percent of consumers' time is spent on apps.⁴

Yahoo's Flurry analytics puts it: "It's an App World. The Web just lives in it."

With this in mind, look at how the percentage of bills paid online increased dramatically in the last year and how 64 percent of consumers who have a mobile pay option have reported increased customer satisfaction.⁵ Then take into consideration the growth of the Internet of Things and the omnipresence of mobile devices, and you'll probably realize that having a mobile presentment and payment offering is not only timely, it's necessary. Have you developed a mobile app for your customers? Take into consideration that 33 percent of households prefer to use a mobile app to make a bill payment and appreciate the convenience of being able to do so. Not only that, 64 percent of consumers surveyed indicated that being able to use a mobile bill pay option increased their customer satisfaction.⁵

Like the OSG Mobile App, a mobile app being developed in the world of IoT should be available for both Android and iOS smartphone device users and be easily available in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store under the client's branded mobile app name. Like ours, it should be designed to enhance the mobile billing and payment process, with the goal of delivering a mobile presentation portal with functions that actively engage subscribers and offer mobile solutions such as convenient mobile bill presentment and payment options. If done correctly, it also can provide new, revenue-generating opportunities for carriers through features such as ad delivery through an opt-in form; local and regional rewards programs; text

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adverts and selling products and services through the app. These potential offerings will allow app providers to receive payments from the advertisers, thus potentially offsetting the costs of offering the app or even making profits as well.

We're living in a world where things once imagined are not only possibilities, but reality. It's up to us to meet and exceed our customers' expectations and take advantage of all the opportunities IoT offers. To quote *Princess and the Frog*, another Disney adaptation, "Fairy tales can come true. You gotta make them happen, it all depends on you." **cca**

OSG Billing Services (OSG) is a next-generation technology partner providing integrated, multichannel electronic and full color print and mail billing and customer communications solutions. Through a state-of-the-art processing environment and a solid focus on the customer experience, OSG helps you meet the needs of your dynamic customers and navigate today's complex billing world.

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