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## InfoGin finding success in crowded mobile browser market

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**INFOGIN POWERS** mobile portals for CNN and AOL as well as selling its Web-to-mobile service to carriers.

While Opera Software ASA continues to attract attention with its mobile browsers and a host of startups go directly to consumers with their transcoding technology, InfoGin is quietly making headway by cozying up to carriers.

The 8-year-old Israel-based startup notched its first big win in 2005, inking a deal to power AOL L.L.C.'s mobile search offering and forging a relationship that a year later saw InfoGin win the right to format Web pages for the Time Warner subsidiary. And InfoGin has continued to find an audience for its transcoding technology, winning deals to format Internet content for Mapquest and others, as well as offering a Google Inc.-like transcoding service for consumers through its mobile Web site.

But the company's real traction has come in the last year, when it bagged several carrier customers for its browsing solution. InfoGin now claims 18 mobile operators and Internet players — including six tier-one carriers in Europe and North America — and 20 million active mobile users worldwide.

InfoGin has kept a low profile — even as it gained customers — with a portfolio of products that aren't as neatly defined as those of Opera, which has been remarkably successful by going directly to wireless users, or Novarra, which offers a browsing solution to carriers.

Instead, InfoGin offers white-label, Web-to-mobile technology that — unlike most transcoding offerings — supports some rich Internet technologies including Flash, JavaScript and Ajax, depending on the handset.

“Because it's a server-based solution,” CEO Eran Wyler said of the hosted offering, “we convert the functionality to the device capability. We convert Flash to an animated GIF if the device can support it. Our server will do the negotiation with the site ... and we will emulate that experience for the user.”

## **It's all about the maps**

Unlike Mowser and Greenlight Wireless's Skweezer, InfoGin's content adaptation technology "maps" Web pages, overlaying numbers on a full page and allowing users to click the corresponding key to see a close-up view. The company markets the offering to carriers as a bargain-basement way to bring the mobile Web to their users, addressing a wide swath of handsets with a minimal investment. The bonus for network operators, of course, is that they don't have to share valuable customer face time to deploy it.

"Even if you take the high-end device in the market, you still need InfoGin, or a solution like InfoGin's, to make sure that the user will get the best experience," said Wyler. "At the same time, you're giving the operator the branding they need. That's another important thing."

Some critics have complained that InfoGin's solution pales in comparison to Mini, Opera's popular offering for Java- and BREW-based handsets. And Opera continues to lead the pack of mobile browser developers, with 35 million downloads of its Mini alone.

But Wyler claimed InfoGin's technology is more complementary than competition for Opera, or Apple Inc.'s iPhone Safari browser, or any other mobile browser on the market.

"I think there is a place for both (kinds of technology)," Wyler opined. "I think that yes, they can work hand-in-hand."