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HTH Worldwide debuts mobile health tool for travelers

By Dan Butcher

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Avoiding close calls

Health and safety services company HTH Worldwide has introduced mPassport, a mobile health information tool for global travelers.

Consumers who subscribe to mPassport get access to HTH's databases of global health and safety information on their mobile phone. Subscribers can access mPassport at <http://www.mpassport.com/mobile> on their mobile phones or at <http://www.mpassport.com> on their computers.

"We began as Highway to Health in late '90s, providing access to care around the world via the Web for people who are in a strange place that need to get care," said Angelo Masciantonio, cofounder/CEO of HTH,

Radnor, PA. "mPassport is our initiative to bring health care everywhere.

"It's a game-changing mobile solution with enhancements to make it more user-friendly on handheld devices," he said. "This lets us bring previously landlocked data to people in palm of their hand."

HTH's mPassport database has more than 4,200 English-speaking physicians and dentists in 180 countries and selected emergency and urgent care facilities for 1,100-plus destinations worldwide.



Passport to health

The company claims that about half of Americans who go on vacation for two weeks or more get sick or have some sort of medical problem.

The mobile service can be bought online at [mPassport.com](http://mpassport.com). Pricing is subscription-based, and costs \$9.95 for 30 days, \$15.95 for 60 days and \$49.95 for a year. It is compatible with any Web-enabled phone worldwide.

The service targets leisure travelers, expatriates, international students and globe trotters. HTH also sells travel insurance to this demographic.

HTH will run a direct-to-consumer marketing piece to increase consumer awareness of its brand. It will run banner ads on travel sites such as Expedia, Orbitz, TripAdvisor and Lonely Planet and on an ad network with 50 different travel Web sites.

This technology represents the convergence of two major trends.

First, the number of Americans traveling overseas is higher than ever - 64 million in 2007 according to HTH. Second, Web-enabled mobile phones have become ubiquitous around the world.

"With mPassport, you can get the same type of information and medical data on your handset as you would by calling a 1-800 number, and you'd have to be transferred to another continent," said Mr.

Masciantonio. "This provides shortcut letting travelers bypass a lot of steps."

Besides the HTH searchable physician database, mPassport also features other medical tools for travel abroad.

Personalized health and security alerts are published daily via SMS and email. The alerts highlight breaking news about risks that arise along the traveler's personal itinerary.

A mobile search feature for hospitals, clinics and pharmacies has profiles for more than 3,400 facilities worldwide. Many are contracted directly with HTH and have round-the-clock emergency rooms.

The mPassport Medication Translation feature covers more than 400 brand-name drugs in the 24 most-visited countries. It yields the country-specific brand names under which common prescription and over-the-counter medications are sold.

The Medical Term/Condition Translation feature captures idiomatic healthcare terms such as "hay fever" and "CAT scan" and critical healthcare phrases including "When can I travel?" in 10 languages.

"Up until mPassport, when people were looking for health information in a strange place, they had to go online, call their health plan or a friend, talk to concierge or a stranger, or read travel magazines and directories like Frommer's and Fodors," Mr. Masciantonio said.

"Now they can travel anywhere in the world, and if you need to see a doctor, we can get you into see them and translate the names of your drugs and translate your terms of service," he said.

CityHealth Profiles on mPassport provide information about healthcare services in hundreds of the world's most popular destinations: local emergency numbers for ambulance, police and fire, emergency and urgent care options, vaccination requirements and local pharmacy practices.

Security Profiles contain up-to-date accounts of security risks for hundreds of frequently visited destinations outside the United States, including terrorism, kidnapping, crime, political instability, reliability of local police and transportation and preferred lodging options.

The txt5 Group Text Messaging service allows subscribers to keep up to five friends and family members informed of their travels via SMS or email. The subscribers save money by sending five messages for the price of one.

There are also featured columns by physicians giving healthy travel tips.

"More and more people are feeling comfortable using BlackBerrys and iPhones, and we plan to develop mPassport in more device specific ways, such as launching an iPhone native application," Mr. Masciantonio said. "We want to take advantage of location-based services of some of these technologies."

HTH plans to continue to develop new ways to use the mobile platform.

"Mobile is the most convenient way to use this service, and optimized mobile applications will really accelerate consumer awareness and change the way apps get distributed to people. Masciantonio said.

"It will become less carrier-tied and more consumer-driven, and we're at the forefront of that," he said.

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