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Panel Abstract

## Culture-Friendly Mobile Interfaces and Applications

**Dr. Dinesh Katre**

Head & Programme Coordinator,  
Human Centred Design & Computing Group,  
C-DAC, Pune, India.  
dinesh@cdac.in

### Abstract

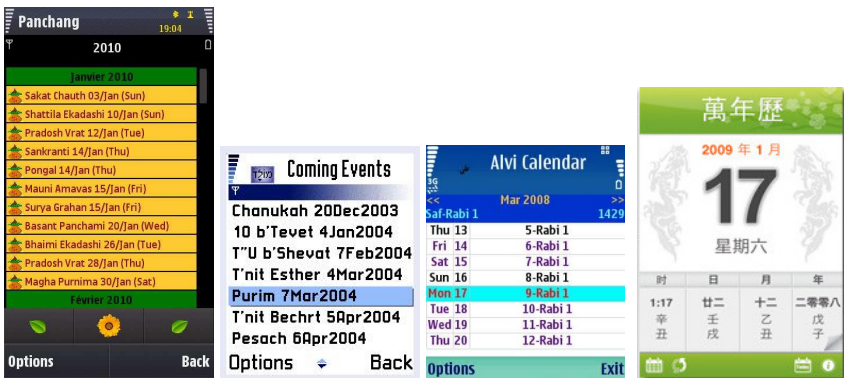
Mobile phones become part of the most intimate and personal space with its users unlike any other computer devices or software applications. Mobile phones accompany the individuals almost everywhere be it home, office, public places or even the most private locations. It connects us with the worlds beyond our physical reach as well as the worlds within our vicinity. The need for *culture-friendly mobile interfaces and applications* is felt when we are interacting with the worlds within our vicinity (local culture) or when the user interacts with another culture. Considering the intimate relation of mobile phones with its users, the quality of “*culture-friendliness*” becomes very critical for a successful interaction within the personal as well as social space.

The panellist presents the *mobile calendar application* as an example to illustrate popular practice versus the local cultural preferences. Almost all mobile handsets are designed with the *Gregorian calendar application*, but on the contrary people with varied religious, regional and national backgrounds follow different types of calendars. There have been some efforts to design Vedic / Hindu, Jewish, Hijri / Islamic and Chinese mobile calendar applications. These applications need significant improvements in terms of use of local languages, listing of local holidays and festivals, greeting messages, iconic representations, festive music libraries and so on. Mobile calendar application is an ideal problem for internationalizing its design. When one visits a foreign country, one should be able to select the mobile calendar of that country for better understanding and synchronization with the local culture.

The panellist presents his vision for *Culture-friendliness* of mobile phones in terms of-

- **Role of culture in personal interaction with mobile**
- **Mobile interaction in a local social group**
- **Mobile interaction in foreign social-cultural settings**
- **Lingua-cultural interfaces**
- **Internationalization of mobile usability**
- **Culture-friendliness for illiterate populations**
- **How mobile phones could imbibe social cultural values?**

India has almost reached 500 million mobile subscribers in year 2010 and is predicted to reach 853 million mobile subscribers by 2014. The mobile business is left with no option but to penetrate the illiterate populations in India, which is approximately 400 million. In this context, the panellist also shares his experience of cultural usability covering the local language interfaces, visual interfaces, usability concerns and mobile applications for the illiterate in India.



## Design attempts of Vedic / Hindu, Jewish, Hijri / Islamic and Chinese Lunar mobile calendar applications

### References:

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