

Made-in-S'pore apps for the socially conscious

BY ESTHER AU YONG

SINGAPORE-developed iPhone applications for the socially conscious are slowly making their mark here.

The latest one, Animal Times, makes it easier for animal lovers to adopt pets - be it a dog, cat, rabbit or hamster - from animal shelters here.

It gives users live updates on the types and numbers of pets available for adoption, including those from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and the Cat Welfare Society.

These mobile applications, popularly known as mobile apps, can be downloaded onto mobile phones and handheld devices, allowing users to gain access to a wide array of Internet

services while on the move.

Developers of these socially conscious applications typically do not earn from the applications, choosing to donate their time and effort - and any money earned - to charitable causes.

For example, Animal Times, which was launched last month, is the brainchild of Ms Desiree Foo, 25, a director of The Patatas, a non-profit arm of a local company.

She decided to create the free application because she realised - through an office e-mail chain in which her colleague discussed adopting a kitten - that "there is a whole pool of socially



GET A PET: The Animal Times app makes adopting pets easier. (PHOTO: JAMIE KOH)

conscious animal lovers out there who would understand the merits of adopting, as opposed to buying, a pet".

Animal adoption has been on the rise in the last few years.

For example, the SPCA has seen a 17 per cent jump in the number of animals being adopted, from 1,000 in 2004 to 1,177 in 2008.

Users can download the application for free at the iTunes App Store. There have been 634 downloads so far.

Comparatively, buUuk, an iPhone application that provides information about food and drink outlets near users, has more than 100,000 downloads.

Ms Foo said: "For the moment, I'm just hoping to get a healthy number of downloads.

"Once I have a decent number of downloads to show advertisers, I can approach them to start paying for placing their coupons or discounts on our application.

"With this advertising revenue, The Patatas will then

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