

The Beacon Opp



Savvy companies across industries see vast potential

As mobile technology continues to develop, the boundary between the physical and the digital user experience is rapidly disappearing – replaced by the synergy inherent to the Internet of Things (IoT). Beacons are an important piece of the IoT puzzle, and they have the potential to enable vast contextual services in the physical world.

iBeacon™ is Apple's implementation of Bluetooth low energy (BLE) wireless technology that provides location-based information and services to iOS devices. Just last month, Google rolled out its open-source beacon communication protocol named Eddystone™.

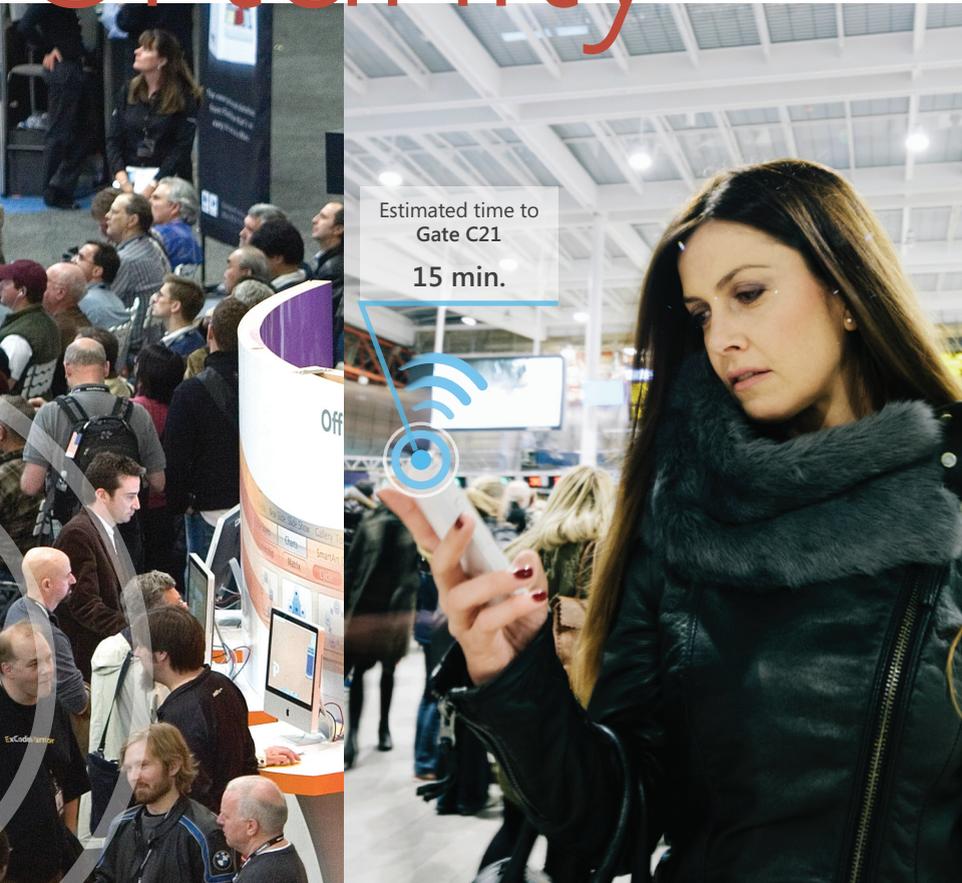
Fundamentally iBeacon and Eddystone are the same – they

give companies the opportunity to deliver highly contextual, hyper-local, meaningful messages to enabled devices. But there is one significant difference. Eddystone is completely platform-agnostic, and that automatically increases the reach of beacons.

Delivering unique and amazing experiences

Initial beacon use was primarily retail-oriented, but discerning executives

ortunity



in other industries were studiously watching and are now rapidly becoming advocates of beacon technology. It opens a new world of possibilities for location awareness, and countless opportunities for interactivity between organizations and mobile device users.

In some cases, the beacon investment is part of a broader strategy to attract the millennial generation to traditionally non-digital experiences, such as museums.

Beacons have already been tested and are being used in diverse industries

ranging from museums (Victoria and Albert Museum, Neue Galerie in New York), to retail (Macy's, Lord & Taylor), to sports (MLB, Wimbledon) and international airports (London's Heathrow, Miami).

Macy's elevates service with technology firsts

With more than 13 million people using Shopkick™, it is the most-used U.S. location-based shopping tool. And now major retailers are capitalizing on what advocates of big data and IoT technology have said

was long coming: bringing a digital layer to the brick and mortar store.

Macy's and Shopkick originally teamed up in November of 2013 to roll out the first retail-based beacons. Late last year, Macy's expanded use of Shopkick beacons from their flagship stores in New York and San Francisco to all of its stores nationwide – retail's largest beacon installation. Keeping mobile customers in mind, Macy's stores were also among the first retailers to support the Apple Pay™ point-of-sale payment system.

Shopkick's beacons run on Apple's iBeacon protocol, using BLE to communicate with shoppers via mobile devices. With the Macy's implementation, communication includes things like personalized department-level deals, discounts, recommendations, and rewards.

SXSW transforms the event experience

Beacon and geo-targeting technologies are big marketing trends, and they are receiving a considerable amount of attention at corporate events.

Case in point, South by Southwest® (SXSW®) holds an annual music, film, and interactive technology conference in Austin. (SXSW is known for major tech announcements, like the launch of Twitter.) This year's installation of more than 1,000 devices was the largest iBeacon deployment to ever be carried out at an event.

South by Southwest and mobile event platform Eventbase teamed up to offer SXSW GO® – the event’s official calendar, map, and social networking app – and incorporated iBeacon technology to better contextualize user experiences. Using the app, attendees could navigate the trade show, create a personal schedule, network with attendees, and join event session discussions.

The proximity-detection technology also gives event managers an efficient way to interact personally with visitors and attendees by triggering location-specific content and alerts to their mobile devices.

MLB.com mobile app is changing the game

For a baseball fan not many things are better than taking in all the

sights, sounds, and smells of a game at a Major League ballpark. Now technology is on that list.

A majority of teams have installed iBeacons in their stadiums, and the beacons connect with the official mobile companion for visiting any MLB ballpark. The Ballpark app lets fans customize their day, and take their memories with them.

Teams can, for example, provide maps, exclusive content, social media, offers, team videos, player entrance music, and seat experience upgrades. Fans can even create a personalized journal including a history of all the games attended, game photos, team stats from visits, and best game highlights.

With the success of beacon technology last year, MLB teams continue to explore new and creative

ways to use the beacons and geo-targeting to improve the game day experience.

Virgin Atlantic lights the way at Heathrow airport

Staying true to its reputation as an innovator in the airline industry, Virgin Atlantic gives passengers inside the Upper Class Wing at London’s Heathrow airport greater experiences. For more than a year, passengers have been receiving personal notifications via the iBeacon protocol.

Passengers using smartphones with Apple Passbook downloaded receive tailored retail offers and learn about in-flight entertainment before boarding. Staff is even alerted to temperature drops on outdoor decks of the airport lounges, so they can give blankets to passengers.



Cisco Meraki MR32



Cisco Meraki MR72

What are beacons?

Beacons are little transmitters that send out information about a specific point of interest or location, and that info is then passively picked up by a smartphone, tablet, or a wireless access point in range of the transmitter. Bluetooth beacons are transmitters that use Bluetooth low energy (BLE) to broadcast signals.

For example, Cisco Meraki MR32 and MR72 access points (APs) include integrated beacon BLE technology with advanced location capabilities to support more active engagements. These dual-purpose APs eliminate the need to deploy dedicated beacon hardware.

Cisco Meraki MR32 and MR72 APs can be integrated seamlessly into any standard WLAN deployment, while giving you a BLE beacon-enabled network, ready for the future.

You can learn more about beacon technology and Cisco Meraki APs by contacting your Zones account executive or call 800.408.ZONES.

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According to the company's brand and customer engagement director, they're only scratching the surface and are developing unique ways to bring the "surprise and delight factor" to the passenger experience.

Creating a lot of room for success

It's clear that beacon technology is not a fleeting technology. The versatility of the technology makes the uses of beacons countless.

Today's visitors to public spaces such as galleries, malls, airports, sports venues, hospitals, and universities expect a mobile experience that is highly relevant, convenient, and delivered in a timely and seamless manner.

Many organizations and developers are realizing the potential of beacon technology and are already taking advantage of it to deliver contextual interactions to mobile device users.

Zones is helping organizations leverage beacon technology and other IoT

solutions. We have an established IoT practice with a dedicated and experienced team that holds advanced technical certifications.

Most importantly, Zones understands the technologies and best practices that power IoT transformation.

Learn more by contacting your Zones account executive or call 800.408.ZONES. [Z](#)

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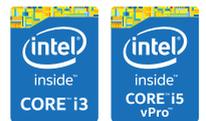
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