

UbiEst Uses LBS to Help Keep Families Safe



The UbiSafe "Where are all?" feature helps the user locate contacts in real time by showing each family member's location on a map.

Where in the world are your family members and friends? Is everyone safe? These sometimes-urgent questions are addressed by UbiSafe, a new location-based services (LBS) application from developer UbiEst S.p.A. of Treviso, Italy. The company's UbiSafe service for mobile devices uses a client that is built on Java™ technology to handle personal security, location of contacts, and emergency needs. A user of UbiSafe can stay in touch with family members, friends, and people with special needs, such as the elderly and invalids. UbiSafe lets the user monitor the real-time location of such contacts on maps. Users who are monitoring a child can choose to set a geographic security radius, essentially a safe area within which they want the child to remain. If the child should move beyond the designated area, the UbiSafe service sends an alert in the form of a short message service (SMS) message to the mobile device of the adult and prompts him or her to call the child or take other actions.

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Unlike child-locator services that require parents to log into a Web site, UbiSafe lets mothers and fathers use their mobile phones to track the locations of their children. Also, UbiSafe offers what Nicola De Mattia, UbiEst's chief executive officer, describes as his company's hallmark: "an easy user-interface design on robust proprietary technology."

Grand Prize Winner, 2008 NAVTEQ Global LBS Challenge — EMEA

UbiSafe recently won the Grand Prize at the 2008 NAVTEQ Global LBS Challenge — EMEA. "The Challenge is becoming the hot spot for launching a successful location-based service," says De Mattia. "Winning the Grand Prize gave us a real measure of the quality and technical value of what we're doing."

UbiSafe is attracting beta testers. "UbiEst introduced the service at the 2008 Mobile World Congress in Barcelona (Spain) in February 2008. Between April and mid-May, 2008, about 220 testers had signed up. Most of the beta testers are coming to us by word-of-mouth," De Mattia says. "People read about it and then register to have it — whatever the price." Indeed, UbiSafe has enjoyed extensive press coverage, including numerous articles, interviews with Italy's RAI Uno radio network, appearances on Italy's RAI Uno TV channel, and podcasts. "The media attention has been huge and constant," De Mattia says, "even without our press office overseeing it!"



UbiEst S.p.A.
Treviso, Italy
www.ubiest.com (Italian version)
www.ubiest.com/lang_id_2/index.htm
(English version)



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Looking ahead:

UbiEst is working on a UbiSafe prototype that is meant to leverage the built-in compass in the Nokia 6210 Navigator, which was introduced earlier this year. "This will help even more with orientation," De Mattia says. UbiEst is also working on a new service that builds on UbiSafe. The service, to be called UbiMeet, is aimed at communities of adult friends. It will include such social-networking features as mobile chat, friend-finding, meeting hot spots, and geographical-location status. Referring to a popular Web 2.0 service, De Mattia describes the new service as a "sort of Twitter your location." Similar to Twitter, which lets users connect and communicate what they are doing through short, frequent updates, the UbiMeet service will let its users tell their friends not only what they're doing, but also where they are doing it.

The UbiSafe service

The UbiSafe service comprises three platforms. First, a master Web interface that provides a fleet management interface to track and trace contacts includes notification alerts and the ability to “follow” movements in real time from a PC. Second, a master mobile client, based on Java technology, runs on a mobile device and provides the same functionality as the Web-based interface, as well as special asset-chasing capabilities. This UbiSafe client runs on Nokia S60 3rd Edition devices, including the Nokia N96, Nokia N95, Nokia N82, and Nokia N76 multimedia devices, and the Nokia E61i dual-mode phone. And third, a “slave” global positioning system (GPS) client runs on a wide variety of GPS-equipped receivers, including GPS-enabled mobile phones and pagers, to track other users' movements. This client also provides the user with a panic button for sending emergency messages.

UbiEst's business strategy

Currently, UbiSafe is offered directly to consumers through the UbiSafe Web site www.ubisafe.com on a subscription basis. In Europe, for example, a UbiSafe subscription costs just under 12 euros a month. UbiEst is looking for other distribution options — especially in Europe and North America. One possibility the company is exploring is working with mobile operators on a revenue-sharing basis. To that end, the company has been meeting with operators in Brazil, Germany, Italy, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. “We're up for anything,” De Mattia says. “Even an ad-based model.”

Regardless of how UbiSafe is distributed, a community of users will be vital to its success. UbiEst already offers online help and tip forums for UbiSafe users. Also, the company plans to create community tools that will let users describe their experiences with UbiSafe, ask and answer questions, and make suggestions for improvement. De Mattia says that he hopes that this online community will become an internal focus group for testing and evaluating new features. “We believe in the value of Web 2.0,” he adds. “We were building an LBS community of users back when it was still Web 1.0.”

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How Forum Nokia helps UbiEst

Forum Nokia helped UbiEst with technical support, including quick answers to technical questions, and provided valuable information. Forum Nokia has also helped UbiEst increase its visibility and business opportunities through marketing initiatives and participation in events. For example, UbiEst representatives demonstrated the UbiSafe service in the Nokia booth at the recent CTIA Wireless 2008 conference in Las Vegas.

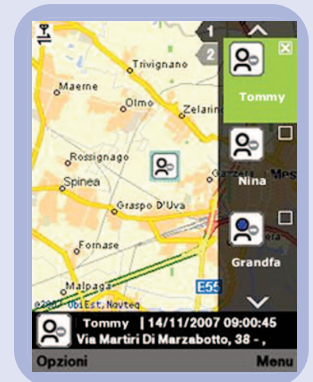
“Forum Nokia has also invited us to invitation-only events, such as one at the S60 Summit Conference in Barcelona, Spain,” says De Mattia. “Nokia has the best network for developers.”

UbiEst

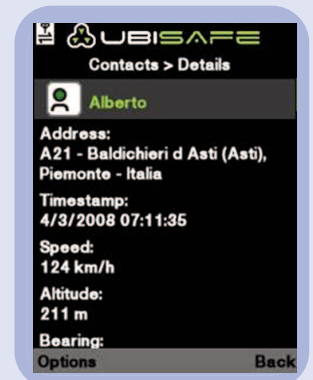
UbiEst, the company behind UbiSafe, was founded in 2001 to develop mobile LBS products for fleet management, personal security, off-board navigation, and workforce management. Its other products include UbiLoc, a location-based fleet-management service; and UbiNav, a navigation service that provides social networking and community features. The company name is based on the Latin phrase for “Where is...?”

For more information, go to:

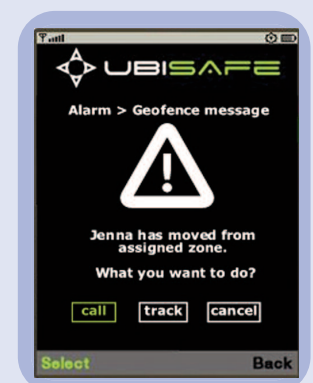
www.nokia.com/developer



The UbiSafe “locate contacts” page displays an interactive map that includes the position of each of the user's family members, represented by icons of different colors. In the right-hand pane, the user selects and unselects the contacts whose location he or she wants displayed on the map.



The UbiSafe contacts page lets the user locate friends and family, activate real-time tracking, and create alarm rules.



The UbiSafe Geofence feature lets the user establish a fixed radius (in meters) on the basis of the contact's current position. If the contact exits the defined radius, UbiSafe quickly notifies the user with an SMS alert, suggesting optional next steps.