Video-sharing applications put users in the picture

Natasha Baker, Reuters

(Reuters) - Text messaging is fast and efficient but a new video-sharing application aims to put users in the picture.

The London-based company Six3 has launched a new video-sharing app by the same name that will enable users to send short video messages as easily as sending a text. Whether it is a business traveler trying to stay in touch with family, or a teenager connecting with friends, the app aims to combine the convenience of texting with the intimacy of video.

"It's easier to send a video message than a text message if you're walking down the street because you don't need to look down and tap away at tiny buttons. You just talk straight into the camera," said Tim Grimsditch, the co-founder and CEO of the London-based company Six3.

Users can also record a message, which must be less than 63 seconds long, and send it to other people using the app, or email it and send it to Facebook contacts.

It can also be used to send public messages via Facebook and Twitter and there are Instagram-style filters, that can add color, or contrast and other effects, that can be overlaid on the videos.

Grimsditch said most people using the app are business travelers and parents with young children. But "video natives," 25-year olds who grew up using video recording devices, are the most active users.

"They're using the app in a much more day-to-day, casual style because they have used video communication technologies their whole lives," Grimsditch explained.

"The text message started with the teens and very rapidly spread north up through the age groups," he added.

The idea for the app, which is available on iPhone now with plans for an Android version, originated when a company executive had difficulty sharing the experiences of his son growing up with family and friends who did not live nearby.

"He was surprised by just how difficult it was to communicate in an emotionally meaningful way," said Grimsditch, adding that video calling services such as Skype require coordination ahead of time.

With the increase in texting, the company thought the time was right to launch the video messaging platform. Since February when it was launched in beta, the app

has over 12,000 users.

Grimsditch said it is possible to send a video as a text message, but added that the app maintains the quality of the video and provides a coherent way of sending video across various platforms.

The company plans to release an Android app in the first half of 2013, as well as premium services such as editing tools to monetize the app.

But can video messaging replace text messaging?

"Over time text messages will only be used for sharing small bursts of information, an address or a meeting time or date, while video messages will be used for almost all family, social and professional communication," Grimsditch predicted.

(Editing by Patricia Reaney and Diane Craft)

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