



**13 March 2003**

**ZINGO BANISHES TRAVEL WOES:  
WORLD'S FIRST LOCATION-BASED TAXI HAILING  
SERVICE COMES TO LONDON**

For the first time since London taxis were licensed more than 350 years ago, there's now a new, easy, reliable and safe way to hail them: by mobile phone. Zingo, a division of MBH, manufacturer of the world famous London taxi, has created a revolutionary service that uses patent pending technology to match passengers, who want to find a taxi, with nearby drivers searching for fares – even if they are out of sight.

Zingo has worked with three of the UK's major mobile networks, Vodafone, T-Mobile and O<sub>2</sub>, to create a unique solution that makes use of the operators' advanced location-based services (LBS). LBS and Global Positioning System (GPS) technology employed in thousands of licensed London taxis enables Zingo to deliver a world first for Londoners. Ongoing talks with Orange and Three are positive, and they are both expected to join the service in the coming months.

Using Zingo allows passengers to hail a licensed taxi by calling a single, national rate number (08700 700 700) from their mobile - which means no more standing in the streets in pursuit of a yellow 'For Hire' light.

## **How Zingo works**

After dialling, passengers are first connected with Zingo's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system – which manages the call for a few seconds while the caller's location is identified using the network operator's LBS technology. The LBS data provides the caller's location as an approximate longitude and latitude.

Using the approximate passenger location, the nearest available taxi is selected from the Zingo pool of vehicles. The taxi's location information is periodically sent through the Vodafone Paknet data network to provide Zingo with the driver's position, using GPS. This information ensures the caller is connected to the appropriate driver with minimum delay.

Zingo's patent pending technology then automatically connects the mobile call to the driver's hands-free mobile phone through a mobile virtual private network (MVPN). This allows passengers to talk directly with the driver – rather than an intermediary call centre – and provide their precise location, such as a building or street name, and confirm the pick-up point. The driver will then turn his 'For Hire' light off and collect them as agreed. This action removes the driver from the pool of available taxis as the vehicle is on a Zingo job.

In line with modern-day consumer trends that see plastic replacing cash for transactions, Zingo also fits a credit card terminal in the driver's cab, which means no more searching for cash points before or during the journey. The on-board credit card payment facility allows transactions to be made in as little as six seconds – the fastest of its kind in a taxi. For security purposes, this data is protected using vehicle specific encryption before being sent through Paknet to be processed. Various security components will prevent stolen terminal use.

Mark Fawcett, managing director at Zingo, comments: "We are delighted to be working closely with three of the UK's mobile networks, and hope that Orange and Three customers will also be able to use the Zingo service in the near future.

Using our unique technology to exploit the network operators' latest location-based services provides us with the opportunity to deliver real customer benefits - as it helps ensure that customers are inside a licensed London taxi within a few minutes of their initial call to Zingo and are able to hail a taxi without venturing outside until they know their taxi is on its way. Feedback from user trials tells us that drivers also love Zingo because it means less empty cab time and ultimately more fares. We expect this world first to be a tremendous success and we hope to roll Zingo out to other cities across the UK very soon."

**ENDS**

### **About Zingo**

Zingo enables passengers to hail a nearby taxi that is available for hire by calling a national rate number from their mobile phone. The Zingo system then uses the mobile networks' advanced location-based technology to locate the passenger whilst global positioning helps Zingo to identify for-hire Zingo cabs in the vicinity.

The passenger is automatically connected direct to the driver on his hands-free mobile phone (supplied as part of the Zingo package). Exact whereabouts can then be established and the fare picked up with the minimum of delay. A £1.60 payment is added to the fare by the driver (a portion of the "Telephone Arrangement Fee" set by the Public Carriage Office fare table), and this is collected by Zingo each week. All Zingo taxis can also accept credit card payments, whether or not the fare was originally hailed through Zingo.

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors:**

Zingo - the brand new way to hail a licensed black taxi.

Manganese Bronze Services Ltd, trading as Zingo, is a subsidiary of Manganese Bronze Holdings PLC, manufacturers of the famous London taxi. This revolutionary mobile phone taxi hailing system uses GPS technology and the Location Based Services of the mobile operators to geographically match prospective passengers with the nearest available Zingo-equipped licensed London taxi. [www.zingotaxi.com](http://www.zingotaxi.com)

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