

FOR GODS' SAKE

UTV Interactive launching devotional stories service on mobile phone

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Soon, the Gods could be talking to you on your mobile phone. Well, almost. UTV Interactive will shortly launch a service called 'Divya Kathayein' whereby subscribers can listen to 10-minute stories about various deities.

Speaking to *Business Line*, Ms Lavina Tauro, Senior Vice-President (Voice Products and Music), UTV Interactive, said the service, now in the test phase, has been received well. It can be accessed even on the most basic handsets by dialling a short code, and is available in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya and Bengali. After Bollywood, mythology and devotional subjects are what most people are familiar with, said Ms Tauro, adding that familiarity increases participation.

Stories related to the Ramayana, Krishna, Shani Dev, Ganesha, Durga, Vishnu, Shiva and Shirdi Sai Baba are offered. At Rs 30 a month, UTV Interactive aims to release two stories per month per deity per month in each language. They will be a mix of narration and dialogue. Eighty per cent of the market is skewed towards Hindu devotional content but occasions such as Christmas would spur similar activity, Ms Tauro said. She says this is the first service of its kind in India.

DEVOTIONAL CONTENT

Devotional content such as *bhajans*, *kirtans* and discourses



accounts for 20 per cent of the downloadable market. Infotainment (news, cricket and so on) accounts for 15 per cent and films and entertainment hog the rest.

'Divya Kathayein' is inspired by the success of UTV Interactive's Audio Cinema, launched two years ago. Also priced Rs 30 per month, this is a 20-minute narration of a three-hour movie, UTV's own and others, with a few original dialogues. UTV launched it first, and mobile operators have followed suit with their own. The Hindi value-added voice services tend to do well in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and even Rajasthan, Ms Tauro said.

To ensure the devotional stories are error-free and do not offend listeners' sensibilities, UTV Interactive has tied up with firms that research and authenticate such content, Ms Tauro said.