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Contus to launch new marketplace app Apptha

Vidhya Sivaramakrishnan, ET Bureau Apr 12, 2014, 03.41AM IST

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CHENNAI: In a first of sorts, Chennai-based Contus, a provider of web and mobility solutions, will set up a marketplace in the next couple of months where developers can buy readymade applications for a fee. These applications can be used by developers who work on open-source platforms such as Magento, Joomla, WordPress, Prestashop, iOS and Android. Contus has named the marketplace Apptha.

(These applications can…)

Contus said there are no Indian players offering such a marketplace, though there are a few abroad. "The concept of a market place for Web app components is a good one. Their challenge will be how to reach the customers in this market," said Dorai Thodla, a well-known technology expert in Chennai.

Vinayak Joshi, founder of a Delhi-based software development firm Learning Concepts, said the concept was good and would work if the pricing and quality were right. "Instead of baking your own bread, it is much easier buying your bread," said Joshi, drawing an analogy between developing your own web-based extension versus buying it from someone like Contus.

For instance, if a developer needs to incorporate the "one step checkout" into his web page, then he can buy it from Apptha marketplace instead of developing one himself. The 100-plus applications, or extensions, that Contus has already developed for its customers in the last few years would be available in the marketplace.

In addition to this, the company is planning to engage with around 15-20 developers to certify and host extensions as well in this marketplace. "I thought if we need to have 1,000 apps, you need at least 300 people. Instead of hiring them, why not tie up with developers?" said Sriram Manoharan, cofounder and CEO of Contus. The company is planning to spend around $200,000 (Rs 1.2 crore) to establish Apptha, where most of it would be spending on advertisements to reach out to newer geographies, especially the English-speaking countries.

Contus is in talks with developers to come up with apps or extensions for its marketplace and it is looking at a 70:30 revenue sharing ratio with them. "Ready-to-launch modules will considerably save a lot of time and be very cost effective," said Lakshmi Potluri, an angel investor and a former cofounder of ecommerce store Jabong.

"Separately, I think these modules, once popular and widely used, make people lose their interest. Hence, the challenge for a company like Contus is to engage and keep making the platform unique."