

Telcos must take risks in consumer innovation

Operators must venture beyond traditional connectivity to stay ahead and unlock growth. This requires a willingness to take risks and accept that not every initiative will succeed—where failure is a vital part. STL Partners' Consumer innovation tracker provides in-depth insights into the innovative services offered by telcos worldwide, highlighting operators who are reshaping the consumer experience and setting industry trends.

Kerina Naran, Analyst

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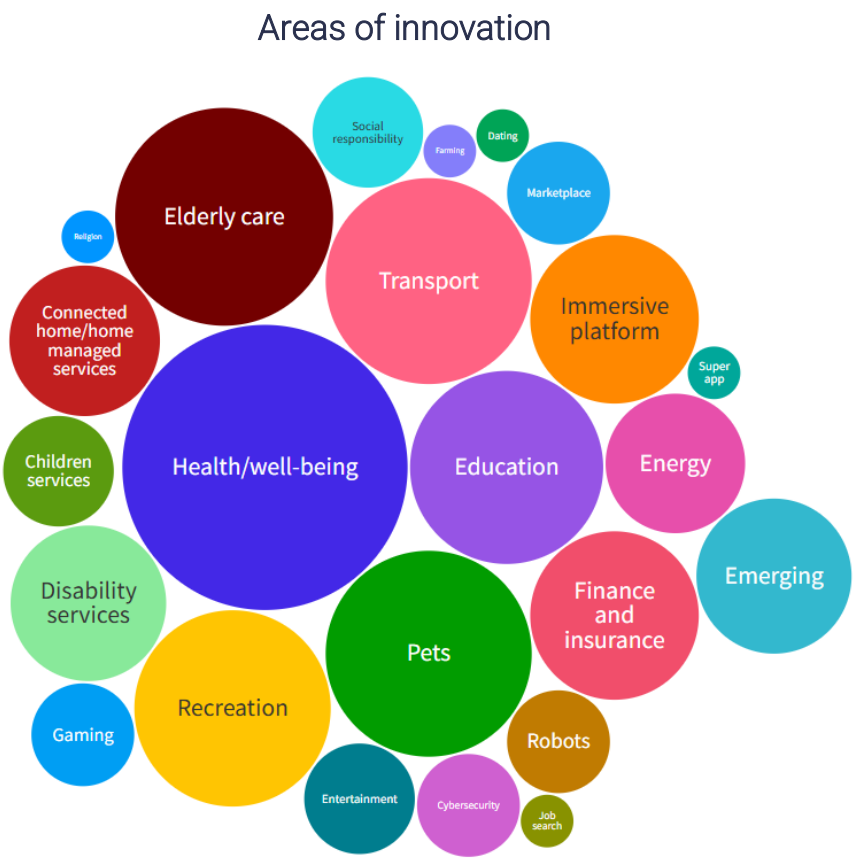
STL Partners' Consumer innovation tracker

The **Consumer innovation tracker**, is a valuable resource for telcos seeking to diversify their offerings and generate revenue beyond core connectivity. Featuring a carefully curated global collection of consumer services launched by telcos, it provides insights into innovation and growth opportunities. Updated regularly, with the latest update in November 2024, the tracker showcases leading operators and notable advancements in consumer services. It highlights innovations across various domains, including service design, business models, partnerships, and entirely novel approaches.

November 2024 highlights

The latest edition of the tracker highlights 109 examples of consumer innovation from 37 operators across the globe, with operators in Asia-Pacific standing out as leaders with 55 services. This update introduces 6 new services, including one in a category not previously covered by the tracker: super apps.



Source: STL Partners

It is important to acknowledge that not all consumer innovations succeed. One service from NTT Docomo has been discontinued as it failed to attract users, highlighting the inherent risks involved in innovation. However, taking these risks is essential for operators to discover what resonates with consumers and refine their offerings for sustained success.

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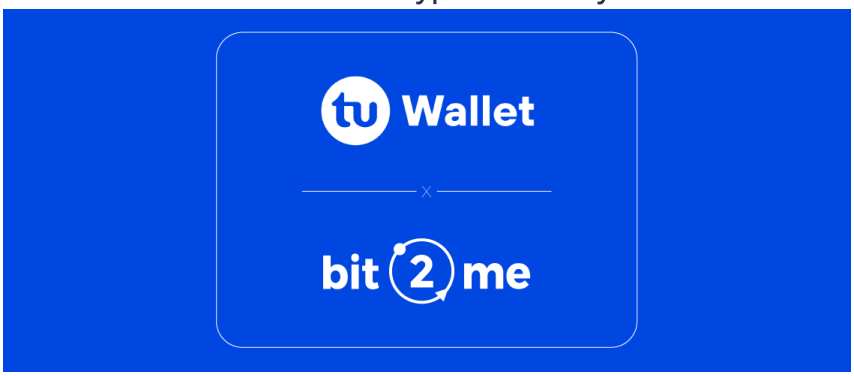
With each update we spotlight standout consumer product and service launches that, in STL Partners' view, excel in both innovation and potential impact.

1. Telefónica's cryptocurrency wallet



Source: Bit2Me

What is it: TU Wallet, part of Telefónica's TU.com platform, is a cryptocurrency wallet enabling users to buy, sell, send, and pay with cryptocurrencies. Operated with Bit2Me, Spain's first licensed cryptocurrency exchange, it offers a secure and user-friendly way to manage cryptoassets and enables transactions with the integrated Bit2Me Card, a virtual MasterCard for payments in retail or online stores.

What makes it different: TU Wallet stands out with its partnership with the regulated Bit2Me exchange, ease of use, and integration of crypto payments into everyday purchases. This service makes managing and using cryptocurrencies accessible for both new and experienced users.

2. Virgin Media O2's AI-scam defender



Source: Virgin Media O2

What is it: Virgin Media O2's 'Daisy' is generative AI designed to pretend to be a human in order to waste scammers' time by engaging them in realistic autonomous phone calls.

What makes it different: Daisy leverages AI-based scambaiting techniques and adopts the voice and persona of a vulnerable elderly woman. It can handle multiple scam calls simultaneously, engaging fraudsters with rambling stories to divert them from targeting real people. This innovative approach tricks scammers into believing they are speaking with a genuine, unsuspecting individual.

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3. Elisa's smart home energy storage solution



Source: Elisa

What is it: Elisa Kotiakku is a smart energy storage solution that helps households reduce electricity costs by storing solar energy or charging during low-price periods for use during peak times. It also supports grid stability through a reserve program, allowing customers to earn rebates by contributing stored energy to Finland's electricity grid.

What makes it different: Elisa Kotiakku makes households both customers and suppliers of the national grid. It provides flexible battery sizes, a 15-year warranty, solar panel integration for energy independence, and a smart app with real-time insights and AI-optimisation of energy management.

Find more details of the tracker here.

Subscribers to STL's Consumer research stream can access the full database and the interactive tool here

Kerina Naran is an Analyst at STL Partners specialising in strategy, AI and consumer services

Get in touch with the author to learn more:

kerina.naran@stlpartners.com

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