

Foreword

Let us borrow this quote from the British humorist and cartoonist Ashleigh Brilliant to summarize the role of mobility in the development of the information society: “Unless you move, the place where you are is the place where you will always be.” In more serious terms, it is fundamental to recognize that today’s economic and societal progress is primarily dependent on the technological ability to sustain and facilitate the mobility of persons, physical goods (let us not forget, for instance, that the probably most critical component of global commerce today is deep sea shipping) and digital information (data and programs).

Recent years have witnessed a rapid growth of interest in mobile computing and communications. Indicators are the rapidly increasing penetration of the cellular phone market in Europe, and the mobile computing market is growing nearly twice as fast as the desktop market. In addition, technological advancements have significantly enhanced the usability of mobile communication and computer devices. From the first CT1 cordless telephones to today’s Iridium mobile phones and laptops/PDAs with wireless Internet connection, mobile tools and utilities have made the life of many people at work and at home much easier and more comfortable. As a result, mobility and wireless connectivity are expected to play a dominant role in the future in all branches of economy. This is also motivated by the large number of potential users (a U.S. study reports of one in six workers spending at least 20 percent of their time away from their primary workplace, similar trends are observed in Europe). The addition of mobility to data communications systems has not only the potential to put the vision of “being always on” into practice;- but has also enabled new generation of services, for example, location-based services.

Mobile commerce leveraging the mobile Web and mobile multimedia is precisely the ability to deploy and utilize modern technologies for the design, development and deployment of a content rich, user and business friendly, integrated network of autonomous, mobile agents (here “agent” is to be taken in the sense of persons, goods and digital information).

I am delighted to write the foreword to this encyclopedia, as its scope, content and coverage provides a descriptive, analytical, and comprehensive assessment of factors, trends, and issues in the ever-changing field of mobile computing and commerce. This authoritative research-based publication also offers in-depth explanations of mobile solutions and their specific applications areas, as well as an overview of the future outlook for mobile computing.

I am pleased to be able to recommend this timely reference source to readers, be they researchers looking for future directions to pursue when examining issues in the field, or practitioners interested in applying pioneering concepts in practical situations and looking for the perfect tool.

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