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Prikko Walden
Abo Akademi University

Bill Anckar
Omenahotelli

Stefan Klein
University College Dublin

Hannes Werthner
eCommerce and Tourism Research Library

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MOBILE CHALLENGES FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Professor Pirkko Walden (moderator), Institute for Advanced Management Systems Research, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Dr Bill Anckar, President, Omenahotelli, Finland

Professor Stefan Klein, MIS Department, University College Dublin, Ireland

Dr Marianna Sigala, School of Management Science, University of Aegean, Greece

Professor Hannes Werthner, eCommerce and Tourism Research Laboratory, ITC-irst, Italy

Scholars and industry representatives are turning their attention towards the promise of electronic wireless media, envisaging that the next - or the real phase of e-commerce growth will be in the area of mobile commerce.[i] Keen and Macintosh (2001) stress that the issue is that mobile commerce (m-commerce) is marking the start of another era of innovation in business and that m-commerce will continue to extend the way organizations conduct business – and change the relationships between companies, customers, suppliers and partners.[ii] Mobility means *freedom* – say Keen and Macintosh – and freedom creates choice and value, something much more than convenience as it may revolutionize the way companies work, buy, sell and collaborate.

Although the mobile Internet appears to have much to offer as an instrument of commerce, little is known about the consumers' willingness to adopt wireless electronic media, and the factors that influence their adoption decisions and value perceptions relating to m-commerce.[iii] Just as we are gradually starting to gain an understanding of the unique characteristics of the fixed Internet, a new medium has emerged, the wireless Internet, which raises many of the same questions in a new context.[iv] Building successful strategies for the mobile marketplace begins, no doubt, by recognizing the distinctive forces driving the emergence of m-commerce.[v] On the Internet, firms can create value for customers in a manner that is different from that which has been achieved in conventional business.[vi] Correspondingly, m-commerce possesses unique characteristics – Keen and Macintosh (2001) call them "the mobilisation of knowledge" - when compared to traditional (i.e. fixed) e-commerce, and many statements on an impending m-revolution have, in fact, been triggered by the assumption that the potential of m-commerce will involve (i) lower barriers, and (ii) greater benefits in comparison to both fixed e-commerce and traditional commerce. In view of that, the key question for m-commerce is to find some way to assess the value of mobile applications to prospective users[vii], and to gain an understanding of the factors that may delay the penetration of the mobile Internet on a larger scale.[viii]

There are a number of ideas of what is going to constitute the key success factors for the actors in the global m-commerce arena. This arena is already growing diversified with a number of application areas, which are growing in different directions and at different paces. Travel and tourism, being one of the largest and most rapidly expanding industries in the world and one of the significant users of ICT in its operations will without doubt be one of the trailblazers in the global m-commerce arena with value added mobile applications.

It can be assumed that travelers' and tourists' lives will be enhanced by smart services, accessible via mobile devices anywhere and anytime. Intelligent software technologies will allow mobile services to be personalized and context-aware to improve travelers' and tourists' experiences. Context-aware mobile services will make a difference as the services and contents adapt to both the environment and to personal interests.

Thus it is not too unrealistic to assume that the competitiveness of tourism organizations and destinations will increasingly depend on their ability to use innovative mobile technologies to promote location-aware services and to serve customers on the move.

The key questions to be addressed in the panel are:
- which are the key value adding mobile services (each panelist is expected to propose and motivate one service),
- what do we know about consumers' willingness to adopt m-services (each speaker will identify one to two factors that will influence the adoption process of the proposed m-service)
- how will these services make the day for the m-traveler and m-tourist, and
- how is the mobile technology going to change the travel and tourism industry?

The panel will in the discussion build a foresight scenario of possible developments to be expected in the coming 2 years in travel and tourism.

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