
Editorial: mobile computing and networking

Binshan Lin

College of Business Administration,
Louisiana State University in Shreveport,
Shreveport, LA 71115, USA
E-mail: blin@pilot.lsus.edu

Biographical notes: Binshan Lin is Professor of MIS at Louisiana State University in Shreveport. He received his PhD from the Louisiana State University in 1988. He is a six-time recipient of the Outstanding Faculty Award at LSU. Dr Lin also received IACIS 2003 Ben Bauman Award for Excellence. Professor Lin has published over 110 papers in refereed journals and over 90 papers in conference proceedings since 1988. He serves as Editor-in-Chief of *Industrial Management and Data Systems*, *International Journal of Mobile Communications*, *International Journal Innovation and Learning*, *International Journal Management and Enterprise Development*, *Electronic Government*, and Associate Editor of *Journal of Computer Information Systems*. His research interests and past publications have addressed e-commerce, Information Technology Management, Quality Management, and Healthcare Management. Dr Lin is an active member of Decision Sciences Institute (DSI), International Association for Computer Information Systems (IACIS), Louisiana Information Technology Research Association (LITRA), and Association for Chinese Management Educators (ACME). He serves as President-Elect of Southwest DSI, Program Chair of ACME 2003 International Conference, Program Chair of LITRA 2003 Conference.

International Journal of Electronic Business (IJEB) always energetically searches the new issues to find and deliver to you the most innovative thinking on electronic business. We continue to focus on strategy, innovation, leadership, technology, and business applications, while widening our coverage to include every major aspects of electronic business. This special issue of the IJEB presents selected papers from growing interests about mobile computing and networking recent years.

In the last few years, web technologies as well as mobile communications have shown an unprecedented fast dissemination. Thus, they have impressively proved the need of a modern information society – which is more and more characterised by mobility – for such as technologies. The convergence of the respective key technologies is a logical necessity and results in the appearance of mobile computing and networking as a new phenomenon of electronic business.

The current problems on the market effectively slowed down the effusive euphoria and the mobile business hype of the years 1999 and 2000. However, they are far from changing the general tendency in the direction of mobile systems and applications. The intention to publish research on mobile computing and networking with a defined forum for this new research field arose in the course of this special issue.

From a research perspective, many mobile computing and networking projects adopt a process perspective and/or a context perspective. The processes themselves can be studied by, for example, design, codification, integration, collaboration, and transfer phases. The process framework can also be studied for mobile business development processes occurring among organisation units. Some mobile business processes exist in duality with the context, that is, they can be influenced by and influence the context. Of course, strategy, structure, culture and technology can be the focus of research in both process and context frameworks in mobile computing and networking.

An alternate approach to study mobile business is from a service provider or a customer perspective. Several key attributes of an efficient and effective service on mobile business would include such factors as trust, usability issues, organisational change, information symmetry, common currency, and social exclusion. This service framework raises concerns that focus on pragmatic issues of 'how' and 'what' make mobile business work better. These could include issues on the role of mobile technologies, factors affecting the value of information services, relationships between service efficiency and workforce capability, types of physical and virtual mechanisms and their impact, and conditions that influence beliefs on privacy and trust regarding mobile business development. Both the process and service frameworks would provide a complete and complementary representation of mobile business research questions.

The papers in this special issue represent a variety of conceptual and methodological approaches that epitomise the complexity of the mobile business applications and development being examined. The viewing angle of this special issue is mostly a business informatics perspective, which tends to integrate the technological and the business aspects of mobile business. We also tried to integrate concerning two other issues. The first one concerns the relationship between practice and research. The second issue was to hold an international perspective which is not limited on North American's view of mobile business applications.

Mobile computing and networking involves efforts on many fronts to be successful. Whether framed in terms of a process and its context or in terms of service efficiency and effectiveness, the topic of mobile computing and networking offers fertile avenues for research. This special issue provides one small step in this regard. It is also important to note however that the research agenda should be closely tied to practical issues in electronic business. The growing literature on electronic business should continue to draw from rich theoretical perspectives, but also deal with the how questions of mobile computing and networking design, applications and management.

As a whole, these six papers provide an overview of some of the most interesting issues which need to be studied under a dynamic view of mobile computing and networking. It is hoped that they will encourage further research into the dynamic aspects of a mobile business world.