

Chapter 1.10

Reviewing Mobile Marketing Research to Date: Towards Ubiquitous Marketing

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate and reflect upon the extant literature on mobile marketing with a view of identifying contributions, gaps and avenues for future research. The review is based on more than two hundred articles published in leading journals and conference proceedings. We first discuss key areas that have already attracted the attention of researchers, such as consumer acceptance in m-marketing and location-sensitive mobile marketing. We then focus on the emerging area of ubiquitous marketing and illustrate how mobile and wireless devices and technologies can become the enablers of meaningful dialogues between customers and marketers on an omnipresent basis. Ubiquitous marketing could be the next frontier in electronic commerce and customer relationship management.

INTRODUCTION

Research in mobile marketing has proliferated steadily, fueled by the unprecedented penetration of mobile telephony, coupled with the overwhelming acceptance of text messaging and the recent uptake of mobile data services. Acknowledging

this surge in research output, academic journals, in the disciplines of both e-commerce and marketing, have published numerous papers related to mobile marketing. The majority of these papers investigate user attitudes against m-marketing and the factors that may inhibit or boost the success of mobile marketing campaigns. A sizeable portion of this research is theoretical and argumentative in nature, while empirical explorations have only

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recently started to emerge. This may reflect that mobile marketing research is still in its infancy; however, it also serves as an indicator of a need to launch new explanatory and conclusive empirical research endeavors that will shed more light in this emerging research area. Such studies should arguably build on a concrete synthesis of research results to date and a carefully drafted set of questions about the future. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the basis for this: we aim to synthesize findings from m-marketing research studies to date and then use this analysis to identify research gaps that may motivate future research.

We start by a systematic review of extant research in the area of mobile marketing. Since such research has already produced a significant contribution to the field of mobile marketing, the review helps in understanding factors contributing to successful mobile marketing campaigns as well as identifying limitations of extant knowledge in the area. This analysis is then used to identify gaps that emerge from reviewing the literature. Several theoretical and practical issues are discussed in order to encourage further research in the field. We identify and present a need to move research beyond the confines of m-marketing into the wider encompassing realm of *ubiquitous marketing* and present both technological and consumer related research challenges in this new area of scientific investigation.

CURRENT M-MARKETING RESEARCH

We have obtained our pool of literature on which the review was based by querying *Business Source Premier*, one of the most well-known academic electronic text databases and *M-lit*, the first on-line bibliographical database dedicated to mobile business literature. Additional research from other resources was added to the EBSCO and M-lit results if a topic was deemed to be under-studied based solely on these references.

Our queries have produced over 400 publications from scholarly journals and conference proceedings, which, after initial analysis and screening, have produced a database of two hundred and nine articles related to m-marketing. In what follows, we use the review of this literature as a basis for understanding the current status and future prospects of m-marketing research. It must be noted that, for reasons of brevity, we could not of course include a review of all 207 papers in this chapter. Instead, we have chosen to focus on the most representative *research areas* and include the complete reference list in the Bibliography on Mobile Marketing that is contained at the Appendix of this chapter. The interested reader can further consult the freely available academic database of mobile literature at www.m-lit.org with over 1,000 references can help the reader to elaborate more on specific topics of m-commerce.

It is interesting to note that m-marketing research seems to be gaining interest and popularity, since papers per year are increasing (Figure 1), while empirical papers dominate the research agenda in recent years. Please note that 2008 papers were quantified since October 1st.

M-advertising, mobile services and applications diffusion and acceptance are the main topics that researchers have focused upon. However, other topics, such as viral marketing and conducting research via wireless devices, are still relatively unexplored (Figure 2).

Early Research: Establishing the Potential of m-Marketing

Some of the pioneering publications in mobile marketing research were the works of Balasubramanian et al. (2002) and Mort and Drennan (2002). While being a good starting point for investigating mobile marketing, such early works were mostly argumentative in nature, identifying concepts related to m-marketing rather than exploring and explaining its potential on an empirical basis. This is perhaps unsurprising, given

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