Foreword

APPREHENDING THE NASCENCE AND AGILITY OF MOBILE COMPUTING

This work, which circumscribes a complex and elusive topic, presents the current state of mobile computing by merging research, theory, and practice. Most fields benefit from decades of research and practice before a book such as this emerges as a beacon that synthesizes past literature and guides future research. However, mobile computing represents a field unlike most others. The speed with which it evolves plunges the field into perpetual nascence, making it difficult to capture its essence before it again changes. Coupled with that are frustrations afforded by the research process, which takes months or years before insights disseminate into practice. The field’s agility resembles information efficiency in financial markets; by the time you hear about and implement a mobile paradigm, it has already begun to become obsolete, or its value has degraded to near zero. In summary, both research and practice struggle to keep pace with mobile computing, or more specifically, its omnipresence and cycles of emergence and maturity. To say that mobile computing is a moving target or peripatetic is facile at best.

Mobile computing commingles many pillars of business and society, including technological, legal, cultural, economic, social, and political influences. Add the complexities of human behaviors, tastes, and trends, and the topic becomes tortuous. This book disentangles many of these hindrances by mixing research, theory, and practice to provide clear examples of how mobile computing can be decomposed and recomposed into sound foundations of contemporary and future applications. Its value lies not only in its contributions to current mobile computing, but also in its structural contributions to subsequent development of mobile archetypes. This book is destined to inspire research and practical agendas in mobile computing for many years. Its adherence to and balance of sound methodology and open-mindedness to change complement mobile computing’s principles and character.

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