Chapter XII
Mobile Internet Adoption by Spanish Consumers

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ABSTRACT

The chapter aims to present an in-depth study of the factors influencing Mobile Internet adoption. The authors analyse the influence of Internet use experience, compatibility, perceived financial risk, credibility and attitude towards Mobile Internet in the M-Internet adoption decision. After identifying the key drivers of M-Internet adoption, the second part of the chapter presents an empirical study of the Spanish market. Results based on a sample of 213 Internet users show that Internet use experience, M-Internet compatibility, credibility and attitude are positive key drivers of M-Internet adoption. Perceived financial risk influences negatively on M-Internet usage intention. This chapter will give managers and students insight into the M-Internet industry and the different factors that influence M-Internet adoption. In addition, these factors can be applied to the specific context of the Spanish market.

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INTRODUCTION

Since its introduction, but particularly in recent years, Internet has become an effective, simple medium for providing information and services to millions of users. Internet has made it possible to tackle successfully two significant issues affecting consumers: time and space restrictions for carrying out their activities. The new technologies have enabled consumers and companies to build “connectivity” by transcending time and space limitations, increasing accessibility and expanding their social and commercial networks (Palen, 2002).

Technological progress is particularly noticeable in the area of mobile telephony which has gained importance with the rapid spread of mobile telephones throughout the world and the development of “wireless” technology. WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) technology has given rise to a new protocol of advanced Internet communications through the mobile phone and allows smaller cell terminals with larger screens to receive all the multimedia content offered on the Internet. Based on WAP technology supported by third generation mobile terminals (3G), multimedia mobile telephony has changed mere telephones into the equivalent of a laptop computer. The new terminals are a screen with an integrated intelligent television and digital radio decoder capable of receiving sound, television and video images on demand.

Wireless communications are enabled by the convergence of two technologies: Internet and wireless technology such as mobile phones and personal digital assistants. With the explosive growth of the mobile phone population combined with the development of wireless technologies, usage of M-Internet services has increased in recent years. The proliferation of Internet via mobile devices will provide the ubiquity, convenience, localization and customisation for users participating in mobile communications and service activities (Lu et al., 2003). In this sense, it should be noted that service quality is very important when providing wireless services because the degree of perceived service quality and perceived value are key factors affecting consumer satisfaction with mobile services (Turel et al., 2006).

Hsu, Lu and Hsu (2007) define M-Internet as “mobile commerce activities, including mobile telecommunication, mobile content, entertainment service and E-commerce relying on a mobile platform”. This chapter accordingly defines the M-Internet user as “the consumer who accesses Internet by using mobile access to computer-mediated networks with the help of an electronic device”.

Internet navigation on mobile devices is taking us to a new spectrum of communications which is changing the shape of work activities and lifestyles. The proliferation of devices for wireless Internet connection is creating unprecedented commercial opportunities, increasing the benefits of mobility (Lu, Yu, Liu and Yao, 2003). In addition to basic mobile services such as communication and the sending of messages, it is also possible to navigate the Internet, access TV, radio services, videoconferencing services, chats and information services, among others.

Increased wireless communications usage in recent years is a clear example of the system’s growth, significance and opportunities and it, therefore, merits special attention from researchers. Despite the importance of M-Internet, there is a lack of literature on the profile of M-Internet users and M-Internet adoption processes. M-Internet research will provide useful information for managers specially at this early stage of development and implementation. As the future commercial success of M-Internet depends to some extent on whether current Internet users also access this medium via mobile devices, it becomes crucial for managers to analyze which variables determine M-Internet adoption by Internet users in order to assign resources effectively to obtain competitive advantages.

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