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Simply put, human-mobile interaction refers to a process in which human beings interact with mobile devices for different purposes, resulting in different experiences. Differing from human-computer interaction, human-mobile interaction is unique in many ways. For instance, it is ubiquitous since we can interact with mobile devices anywhere regardless of where we happen to be. It is wireless as we do not have to be tied by the cable connection like what we do with desktop or even lap computers. It is personal because figuratively it has become part of our bodies. And it is highly contextual since our interaction with mobile devices can be influenced by contextual factors, such as the mobile environment in which we find ourselves in, the activities in which we interact with mobile devices, and the purposes for which we interact with mobile devices. Similar to human-computer interaction, however, human-mobile interaction has been investigated largely on its technical side, mostly focusing on its areas, ease and enhancement.

The examined areas include mobile banking, mobile learning, and mobile content sharing. For instance, in the case of mobile payment, human-mobile interaction could be influenced by content, ease of use, promotion, made-for-the-medium and emotion (Liu, Wang & Wang, 2011). It may also happen in “ensuring ubiquity and mobility in learning without time, place and technical limitations” and “efficiency, effectiveness and usability of mobile learning applications” were also examined (Petaji, 2008).

On how to ease human-mobile interaction, for instance, a proposed NeuroPhone project suggested that human-mobile interaction would be hands-free, silent and effortless if neural signals could be leveraged to control mobile phones as suggested by a group of researchers (see Campbell, Choudhury, Hu, Lu, Mukerjee, Rabbi, & Raizada, 2010). And it would also be hands-free in another proposed EyePhone, where “an interfacing system capable of driving mobile applications/functions using only the user’s eyes movement and actions” (Miluzzo, Wang, & Campbell, 2010). Academic attention has also been paid to the fact that distractions of all kinds may affect user attention allocation during human-mobile interaction due to the scarcity of individual visual and cognitive resources available (Tsiaousis & Giaglis, 2008).

On how to enhance human-mobile interaction, earlier studies suggest that human-mobile interaction can be increased by “matching the object visibility to fulfill the users need” and simple interactivity (Petaji & Dika, 2008). It can also be enhanced by improving personal, social, public, and hybrid participatory sensing (users involved) systems as well as personal, social and public opportunistic sensing (users not involved) systems (Khan, Xiang, Aalsalem & Arshad, 2013), by 3D augmented reality technology despite the small screen and limited input capabilities mobile phones (Koceski, & Koceska, 2011), through the installation of an emotional recognition system (Alepis & Virvou, 2012), or through integrating pervasive gaming elements into mobile content sharing” and annotate[ing] real world locations with multimedia content, and concurrently, provid[ing] opportunities for play through creating and engaging interactive game elements, earning currency, and socializing (Chua, Goh, Lee, & Tan, 2010).
The largely technologically-dominated studies of human-mobile interaction have left the human side unfortunately marginalized if not totally neglected. To fill the gap, as the editor of this volume, I invited 26 scholars from 10 countries where they are based to investigate 19 topics, focusing on the human side of human-mobile interaction in mobile education, mobile learning, mobile government, mobile journalism, mobile elections, mobile business, mobile advertising, mobile marketing, mobile branding, mobile public relations, and mobile health.

After more than one year of collaboration, the results have been put together in the form of this volume, which consists of 19 chapters. Among those chapters, 11 are research chapters while the rest are review chapters. Although research chapters have slightly different structures, review chapters follow largely the following structure: a. introduction, b. state of the art, c. to summarize previous studies, d. to map the future, and e. conclusions. The state of the art section is where major changes and trends of the chosen topic are elaborated. In summarizing previous studies, the focus lies in reviewing key concepts and themes, key theories and methods, key findings and achievements, and key weaknesses and problems. In mapping the future, major attention is paid to new concepts and themes, new research areas, new theories and methods, and recommendations.

Specifically, the topics investigated in this volume can be broadly grouped into the following six categories: a. mobile learning (Chapters 1-5), b. mobile government (Chapters 6-8), c. mobile journalism (Chapters 9-10), d. mobile persuasion (Chapters 11-16), and e. mobile youth (Chapters 17-19).

In Chapter 1, Fernando de la Cruz Paragas shared his findings regarding the interaction between learners and mobile in the context of learning with and about the mobile phone. The examination of human-mobile interactions took another turn in Chapter 2, where Saleh Al-Shehri investigated the situation in the case of mobile language learning. In his ethnographic examination of multilingual communication on mobile devices in the case of Brunei Darussalam, Mukul Saxena shared his findings on how multilingual mobile users interact with mobile in Chapter 3. Kenneth E Harvey, Philip J. Auter and Samantha Stevens offered a comprehensive review of changes, challenges and trends in discussing the interaction between education and mobile in Chapter 4. A group of young mobile scholars from Africa, namely, Kushtha Kelebeng, Rebaone Mpalazi, Keorapetse Gosekwang, Pendukeni Phalaagae, Tebogo Mangwa, Tebogo Kebonang, and Thototobolo Morapedi offered in Chapter 5 their insightful observations regarding the African substance and style of how learners interact with mobile based on their critical and comprehensive review of major published studies of mobile learning in Africa.

In Chapter 6, Beatriz Barreto Brasileiro Lanza and Maria Alexandra Cunha investigated how government interacts with mobile in their investigation of how SMS was used as a tool for mobile government in Brazil. In Chapter 7, Wendy Li offered her answer to the question whether it is a gear or game change for governments to move from e-government to m-government based on her critical review of the existing literature. When elections can also occur in the mobile space, what will happen to the interaction between voters and mobile? The answer can be found in Chapter 8 by Oarabile Sebubi.

In Chapter 9, Kenneth E. Harvey offered his insights on major tipping points amidst changes and trends in the interaction between local news and mobile. And another major case offered by Hans Karl Meyer and Burton Speakman in Chapter 10 focused on how journalism interacted with mobile in the case of how journalists played a major role in melding social media and social capital.

From Chapters 11 through Chapter 15, Kenneth E. Harvey and his research team (Philip J. Auter, Yulia An and Nygmet Ibadildin) provided insightful, critical and comprehensive review of major changes, challenges and trends in the interactions between mobile on the one hand and marketing, branding, public relations, business, and advertising, on the other hand. Qi Yao and Mei Wu, in Chapter 16, offered a case
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study of how WeChat, the most popular instant messenger in China, has been widely used in advertising activities in the world’s second largest economy.

The last but not the least theme of this volume is the interaction between mobile and youth. This theme starts with Chapter 17, in which Yuchan Gao shared the results of her investigation of game players interacted with mobile in the case of mobile gaming in order to lead a gratifying mobile life. Chapter 18 contributed by Zeinab zare mohzzabieh, Seyedali Ahrari, Bahaman Abu Samah and Jamilah Bt. Othman investigated how socialization occurred in the interaction between youth and mobile. Janice Hua Xu, the last contributor, on the other hand, provided a very interesting and imperative critical discourse analysis of news coverage of how left-behind children interacted with mobile in China in Chapter 19.

Human-mobile interaction has been examined in this volume with a special focus on the human side by 26 scholars from 10 countries. Together, they have identified major opportunities and trends in the new age of human-mobile interaction locally or globally.

The main purpose of this volume is to serve as a stepping stone for further studies in examining how human beings have been interacting with mobile in different countries in different contexts in different activities for different purposes. It is the hope of the editor of this volume that further studies of human-mobile interaction will be conducted in a more comprehensive and comparative way so that findings from different countries can be triangulated to identify both universal and particular patterns of human-mobile interaction.

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REFERENCES


