A TAXONOMY FOR ASSESSING FITNESS
OF MOBILE DATA SERVICES
IN US CONSUMER MARKETS

By

Michael Trupiano

Submitted to the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Engineering in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

01 February 2001

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ABSTRACT

The market for mobile access devices is exploding as measured by conventional consumer electronics adoption standards. At rates outpacing consumer adoption of telephones, televisions, VCRs, and personal computers, mobile access devices are headed on the path of ubiquity in our culture over the next several years.

A survey of the wireless market today shows that mobile access devices have certain characteristics, which allow for the creation of value-added services to the consumer. These characteristics include location-awareness, personalization, and immediacy. An examination of revenue models of information goods (as found on the World Wide Web over the last several years) reveals historically useful information that can help shape a taxonomy for assessing fitness of mobile data services in U.S. consumer markets. The ability to build an install base, to provide value-added (non-commoditized) products and services, and to manage the customer will be vital to the success of mobile data services firms.

A framework originally described by Shapiro and Varian is employed as a measuring stick. A new framework and concomitant rubric are developed which measure a relative degree of opportunity and profitability for firms considering a foray into mobile data services. Mobile data service candidate companies are then measured against this rubric.

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Amar Gupta

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Cambridge, Massachusetts
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