



The Next Generation

Thanks to 4G wireless networks designed specially for data, the mobile Internet is being transformed at warp-speed.

In partnership with



InfoGin[®]

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The handcuffs are off. For years we've heard that the mobile Internet would give us access to websites and e-mail from handheld devices that can be used anywhere. For years we saw the problems: slow speeds, spotty coverage, awkward interfaces, and scaled-down content. The potential of the mobile Internet was constrained by the reality of the mobile Internet. The big buzz turned out to be ho-hum.

That, however, is changing. Innovative technologies, more user-friendly designs, and savvy, cutting-edge services are blurring the line between what we can do in the office and what we can do on the go. Call it Mobile Internet 2.0. Call it the system we've been waiting for.

"Mobile Internet users are going to be the fastest-growing community of broadband users over the next five years," says Berge Ayvazian, chief strategy officer at Yankee Group, a Boston-based technology research and consulting firm. "Mobilizing the Internet is as big a trend as creating the web in the first place. We're no longer going to be limited by slow speeds and poor interfaces."

What's making this newer, better mobile web possible is the development of so-called 4G, or fourth-generation, wireless networks. They're not just faster than the 3G networks most of us now use. They're also designed specifically for data, which makes them far more efficient. "3G is a voice-oriented service that allocated 90% of the spectrum space to voice," says Ayvazian. "That tied up a lot of bandwidth, which isn't what you want when you're accessing data. With 4G, 100% of the spectrum is devoted to data." Phone calls are

treated as simply another form of data, which lets the networks allocate bandwidth for calls on the fly.



Options Unplugged

There is no one pathway to 4G. Wireless providers will be able to choose from several

technologies now coming onto the market or soon to enter it. Sprint Nextel Corp., for one, has chosen a 4G telecommunications platform called WiMAX, which stands for Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access. WiMAX, which Sprint expects will be used by 100 million people in 2008, provides wireless data over long distances, similar to today's cellular networks. The big difference is that it's much, much faster. And because WiMAX is a standards-based technology, equipment from different providers will work seamlessly, making it easy to roam among networks and use different devices.

Toward that end, Sprint Nextel has set up a partnership with Clearwire Corp., a WiMAX-based Internet service provider founded by cellular phone pioneer Craig McCaw. The agreement, which provides for seamless roaming

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Navini is the leader in providing Mobile WiMAX solutions worldwide with over 70 commercial networks in six continents.

Navini's unique technology solution brings personal broadband to the mass market, just as cell phones have made personal voice communications a mass market reality. Mobile WiMAX and, in particular, Navini's Smart WiMAX implementation, make it possible to provide retail-friendly price points for consumers.

Navini's Ripwave® MX solution consists of customer modems, base stations, and element management systems (EMS) that run in the full range of spectrums.



between the partners' networks, will enable the two to share infrastructure and collaborate on new wireless products and services.

Dallas-based Navini Networks has developed a Mobile WiMAX enhancement called "smart beam-forming," which delivers WiMAX signals with up to 100 times more power. "That translates into higher throughput, more coverage, and better building penetration," says Sai Subramanian, Navini's vice president of product management and strategic marketing. Users get higher speeds, as well as service in more locations, both indoors and outdoors; operators get more cost-efficient systems.

"In the past, the mobile Internet has been a limited version of the Internet, delivered at premium prices," says Subramanian. "We're changing the game by delivering the whole wired Internet experi-

ence to the mass market and to a device of your choice." Navini—which has already deployed a number of Mobile WiMAX-based broadband networks around the world—is currently working with a startup telecom company, Horizon Wi-Com, to provide next-generation wireless service in select cities in the Northeast, including New York, Boston, and Philadelphia.



Blazing Speeds

WiMAX, of course, isn't the only game in town. Ericsson, the Swedish telecommunications

giant, is playing an active role in the development of mobile broadband technologies such as 3G/HSPA and Long Term Evolution (LTE). While the company plans to have



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LTE-compliant equipment deployed by 2009, it has already demonstrated prototypes with blazing speeds for next-generation broadband. For Ericsson, however, the future of wireless networks isn't just about data rates. Devices and services need to be accessible to users, not just in terms of price but also in usability.

"Mobile telephony and the mobile Internet are playing a key role in the development of society," says Jan Wareby, senior vice president and head of Ericsson's multimedia business. "Research shows that when mobile penetration increases by 10%, GDP shows a 0.6% increase. At Ericsson we are continually developing new solutions to allow consumers to easily access and consume mobile Internet services and enriched communications features."

To better understand user preferences, the company uses its Ericsson ConsumerLab. Based on its studies, Ericsson builds multimedia solutions that link consumer desires with effective business models around the mobile Internet. This involves an array of services such as music downloading, mobile TV, video, and advanced messaging for consumers, as well as unified communications systems in its enterprise offering.

With all the focus on technology, it's easy to lose sight that the user experience needs careful consideration, too. For a long time, content providers thought that mobile users required mobile content—i.e., scaled-down versions of the sites they used in the office or at home. To some extent, this was a necessary evil—a result of the small screens, puny keyboards, and slow access speeds of mobile handsets. But it was also a mindset: Someone on the go, the developers concluded, would rather read a summary of the news than the full article.



Feature-Packed Phones

Not everyone agreed. "Users want the real Internet," says Eran Wyler, CEO and founder of InfoGin, an Israeli company determined to bring a real Internet feeling to mobile devices. "If I'm in a store," he says, "I want to do comparison pricing with the same site I use when I'm at my desk." Easier said than done. Because there are so many different devices, each with different features, developers would build their mobile sites according to the lowest common denominator. This meant that a user with an expensive, feature-packed phone would see the same thing as the user with the most basic piece of equipment.

InfoGin's solution was to create a system that sits between the Internet and a mobile device, analyzing the website a user requests and formatting it for his or her particular device. This approach has a number of payoffs: The "wired" Internet experience is more closely replicated; users get an experience tailored specifically for their device (InfoGin works with more than 4,000 different devices); and content providers save money because they're no longer forced to devote teams to create mobile-specific sites. "They're seeing cost reductions of more than 80%," says Wyler.

But cost is only part of the equation. "We focus on the technical stuff so content providers can focus on their creativity, their content—it's what they do best," says Wyler.

As the mobile Internet evolves, users will be demanding better applications. Developers that don't provide them may go the way of those old voice-based networks. ■

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