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An investigation of WAP based applications in Sri Lanka

Mobile usage around the world, including Sri Lanka, has been growing rapidly. Statistics show that 428 million mobile devices were sold in the first quarter of 2011. In addition to voice based services, mobile service providers are offering services based on Wireless Access Protocol (WAP), mobile broadband, mobile television etc. WAP is one of the most commonly used data transfering technoloies. Email by mobile phones, e-commerce transactions, tracking stock markets, music downloads, and providing news headlines and sports scores are some of the examples of WAP based applications. A number of studies have shown that there is a high, positive influence of WAP based mobile commerce applications on business and society today.

As Internet penetration rates are low is Sri Lanka, WAP could be a viable alternative to access e-commerce application. It should be noted that the majority of mobile phones support WAP. Previous studies have indicated that use of WAP based applications is very popular in many countries. A preliminary survey was conducted to determine usage of WAP based application by mobile phone users in selected areas of Sri Lanka. However, it was found that usage of such applications is very low.

The initial findings of this research have shown that mobile users' poor knowledge of WAP technology, lack of awareness of the availabe WAP based applications, reluctance to use WAP because availability of Internet access through other ways, vary low bandwith on WAP when accessing the Internet, unavailability of high quality WAP based applications and small size of mobile phone screens as main reasons for poor WAP based application usage in Sri Lanka. Small customer base may discourage service providers in promoting and facilitiating use of such applications.