

Preface

The usage of mobile computing and social networking has skyrocketed in the past several years. Since the introduction of Apple's iPhone, the mobile phone has now truly become the device that Mark Weiser noted in his vision for ubiquitous computing (Weiser 1999). Since the introduction of Facebook, social networking has become one of the most popular activities on the Internet. We are now entering a new computing era where mobile computing and social networking have combined into mobile social networking – a means for people to socialize and connect directly through their mobile phones.

Mobile social networking is certainly not new terminology coined by us, as there have been many articles, whitepapers, and industry and academic books on or related to this subject. However, previous books have only discussed the business of social media and social networking applications using mainstream applications such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn (Roebuck 2011), user behavior within these networks (Zhao et al. 2011), and their implications in terms of analysis from the network, data, and sociological points of view (Aggarwal 2011; Fuhr 2010). These books fail to investigate mobile social networks such as Foursquare that are being created through mobile devices and used during activities. Our book looks at mobile social networks from the micro point of view, that is, at a particular activity and how this can be recorded and shared easily via online social networks. We also investigate specific research issues that have been neglected by previous books. In addition, our book deals with the research and cutting-edge technologies of mobile social networking, and provides comprehensive coverage of applications, data analysis, design, human–computer interaction, and sociology.

The objectives of the book are as follows:

1. Identify current problems in mobile social networking and propose possible solutions
2. Provide examples of real-life applications that illustrate mobile social networking

3. Demonstrate real-life data extracted from deploying the applications in the field
4. Challenge the widely accepted preconceptions of what mobile social networking is within the industry and academic fields

Our book has contributions from leading experts in mobile social networking, covering the areas of data mining, machine learning, ubiquitous computing, mobile computing, trust, human–computer interaction, applications and services, and social computing. These experts come from academia or industry, and are well respected in their areas.

This book targets graduate students and researchers interested in mobile social networking. In addition, we believe that business professionals and CTOs can also benefit from understanding this new technology – how it affects their business, and what issues they should address in order to stay ahead of the competition. We identify the research issues in mobile social networking, and outline a research agenda as to what other research issues still need further study.

This book is by no means meant to be a complete book on mobile social networking, as it is impossible to cover all aspects in a book of this size. However, we do hope that this book becomes a useful tool for industry practitioners and researchers to help advance the field, and to increase awareness of mobile social networking.

We would have been unable to complete this book without the following individuals. First, we thank the contributing authors for taking time in their busy schedules to write their chapters. Second, we thank Springer for giving us the opportunity to help create this book. Third, we thank our institutions for providing us the environment, the inspiration, and the technical and financial support for our research. Fourth, we thank our families for supporting us. And finally, we thank you the reader, for finding this book and reading it. When you read the book, do not just blindly accept what is written. Think about the concept, the methods, the experiments and the results, and challenge them. Do they make sense, do you agree, what is missing, what are the opportunities? Then use that to formulate your own research, and discuss it with others on social media.

If you find any errors or would like to provide comments and feedback, please join our Google group at msnbook@googlegroups.com. And since this is a mobile social networking book, you can use social media to also follow us on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/MobileSocialNetworkingBook>) and Twitter (http://twitter.com/msn_book) to share your comments there.

Finally, we hope that you enjoy reading this book, and we look forward to your comments! Happy mobile social networking!

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