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## Mobile social media: The new hybrid element of digital marketing communications

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### Abstract

The powerful smartphone and other mobile devices have given birth to lots of social media applications and many more in the pipeline. This paper aims at throwing some light on the evolution of mobile social media, introducing the mobile marketing and mobile social media and various concepts and classification of mobile marketing. An extensive literature review of papers on social media and mobile phone applications is done to develop an understanding of the mobile social media usage. A discussion on usage of mobile social media for various corporate as well as marketing communications, sales enhancement and developing cordial relationships with the customer. Finally, recommendations on its usage and future of mobile social media. This article focuses on the importance of mobile social media applications in the current digital marketing arena. The article also develops valuable insights on mobile social media, which is of great value for mobile marketing and social media marketing managers in the near future.

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*Keywords:* Digital Marketing; Google Latitude; Mobile Marketing ; Mobile Social Media; Smartphone

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### 1. Mobile Social Media and Mobile Marketing-An Introduction

What will be your reaction if you induce to use Nokia 1100 instead of your Android phone? More than a decade has gone by since then mobile phone has become a part and parcel of our spirit. The majority of people feels that they

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are missing something if they forget their mobile phone at home. People barely remember that when it was the last time they were without their cell telephone. In the present scenario, it is difficult to imagine our life without a mobile telephone. According to Nielson Digital Consumer report (2014, p. 5), “Americans on an average own four digital devices and ownership of many digital, mobile and connected devices has reached critical mass. When looking at the average American household, HDTVs (83%), Internet-connected computers (80%) and smartphones (65%) are in a majority of households, with a near majority for digital video recorders (49%) and gaming consoles (46%)”.

The very first location and mobile marketing equipped mobile device was Palm VII, a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) which was developed by Palm Computing in 1999. This device allowed consumers to access weather and traffic information but was very costly, charging \$ 300 for each megabyte of data usage. There are 914.92 million mobile phone users in India (Highlights on Telecom Subscription Data as on 30th June, 2014, 2014) i.e. 75 % of Indian population use mobile phones. The first commercial GPS with location finder and restaurant guide was launched by NTT DoCoMo. But Mobile marketing revolution started in true sense in June 2007 with the iPhone. Apple has sold more than 500 million iPhones worldwide (Rogowsky, 2014). This provides users access to 250,000+ applications which enable them reading books (Kindle app), to search information (Wikipedia app), to purchase utility goods online (amazon app), to book trains and air tickets (IRCTC app), to remain connected with friends (Facebook & WhatsApp) and many more to name. After the iPhone revolution. With the emergence of iPhone various companies like Gowalla in 2007, Foursquare in 2009 sprang up in mobile marketing and mobile social media came into existence. Subsequent to these dedicated applications of giant internet companies, like Google latitude (2009), Facebook Places (2010) entered the mobile market. Presently Foursquare is considered as the market leader in mobile social media, with more than 45 million registered users. Foursquare enables users to share their location with each other by checking-in at various places. Mobile social media is distinct from conventional social media in many ways. This paper aims at throwing some light on the evolution of mobile social media, introducing the mobile marketing and mobile social media and various concepts and classification of mobile marketing. A discussion on usage of mobile social media for various corporate as well as marketing communications, sales enhancement and developing cordial relationships with the customer. Lastly, recommendations on its usage and future of mobile social media. The paper consists of four sections as follows:

- Section 1 defines mobile social media and mobile marketing.
- Section 2 of the paper focuses on the use of social media applications in business.
- Section 3 offers three recommendations about the effective use of social media mobile applications.
- Section 4 focuses on up-coming trends and threats of mobile social media

### *1.1 What is mobile marketing and what it is not*

Mobile marketing applications are of many types and mobile social media is one part of it. According to Andreas M. Kaplan (2012, p. 130) “Mobile marketing as any marketing activity conducted through a ubiquitous network to which consumers are constantly connected using a personal mobile device”. Three conditions are required to be considered as mobile marketing. Firstly, there should be an omnipresent network. Mark D. Weiser (1991), Chief scientist at Xerox PARC in Palo Alto, created this term omnipresent. Divergent to the belief an omnipresent network is not essentially a single network, but it is an amalgamation of different networks. For example, one can be linked at home via wireless local area network, which in turn switches to 3G when outdoors and further changes to WiMAX network in the workplace. The crucial factor is not the network but the inter-convertibility into different networks occurs easily and undetectably. Secondly, there should be constant user access to the mobile network. As far as mobile phones are concerned, this condition is a trivality, as the majority of individuals relies so profoundly on mobile phones that there is a rare chance of leaving mobile phone at home. On the other hand, for devices like tablet computers, continuous access is dependent more on the user rather on the technology as user has to make a decision that device has to be switched on continuously. Lastly, there is possession of personal mobile device. The mobile device can be defined as any instrument that enable access to an omnipresent network beyond one definite access gate. The classic example of a mobile device is commonly used mobile phone. A netbook can also be considered as mobile device if it has an access to various networks like WLAN, 3G etc. As far as mobile marketing is concerned, the mobile device possessed by the user should be personal and not a shared one. This means that every member of the household should be in possession of a separate personal mobile phone so that mobile devices

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