Cahners In-Stat/MDR
Wireless Internet Panel Findings
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Boosting Your Phone's Intelligence

You probably thought that only people can get smarter, but that isn't the case. While schooling can make a person more knowledgeable, new technology can make wireless phones more intelligent, too. These newer technologies, including Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) 2.0, Qualcomm's BREW (Binary Runtime Environment for Wireless), and Sun's J2ME (Java 2 Micro-edition) technology, not only boost a phone's IQ, they also make the devices more useful to subscribers. This is important as only 8% of wireless Internet users say that they are very satisfied with their wireless Internet experience today, so there is a significant amount of room for improvement.

A recent survey of Cahners In-Stat/MDR's Wireless Internet Panel illustrates that while most users don't know very much about the new technologies, they are interested in the capabilities that they can deliver. But first, you might be asking yourself, just what are these new technologies all about?

First, WAP 2.0 (or NG, for Next Generation) is the newest version of WAP. This technology still relies on the client-server approach, where browser-based terminals pull down information from a server. In WAP 2.0, support for a graphical user interface (GUI), graphics and pop-up menus, as well as other functionality, is provided. WAP is a standard provided free of charge to those who wish to develop products based on it.

Sun's J2ME provides developers with APIs, tools and supplies for creating networked products and applications for the consumer and embedded markets. Sun makes its money by licensing the software. Several handset manufacturers have chosen to integrate J2ME on their handsets.

BREW, on the other hand, is a thin, applications execution environment designed for wireless devices. QUALCOMM is providing BREW free of charge to handset makers for integration onto their devices. The company is also providing the BREW SDK to developers free of charge. QUALCOMM makes it money by getting a share of revenues on the services that carriers sell to subscribers. Both J2ME and BREW can work on WAP, or other browser-based, handsets.

All of these technologies enable device manufacturers, service providers, and content creators to generate revenue by developing and deploying new applications and services for their customers. They are all important because they work on handsets, which are subscribers' primary wireless Internet access device.

In a recent survey of Cahners In-Stat/MDR's Wireless Internet Panel, the majority (56%) of respondents said they were at least somewhat familiar with WAP. Of those, 60% are at least somewhat familiar with WAP 2.0. This compares to only 32% of respondents are at least somewhat familiar with J2ME, and only 18% who are at least somewhat familiar with BREW.

As previously mentioned, respondents were interested in what these new technologies could do for them. For example, both J2ME and BREW-enabled phones allow users to download applications and run them locally on a handset. Thirty-six percent of panelists said this capability would be very useful, and another 49% said it would be somewhat useful. Such a capability could improve users' dissatisfaction with their wireless Internet services' slow transmission speed,

experience with dropped sessions, and having to pay buy the minute to use these services -- all of which users cite as key frustrations.

Given this capability, respondents said they would most likely download news and information services (82%), and mobile communications services such as chat and email (67%,), followed by enterprise applications such as productivity, collaboration, and workforce automation. Mobile entertainment and commerce services would be used less frequently. Additionally, respondents would be willing to pay to download these applications. Eighteen percent said that they would pay $3 or more to use each of these applications.

Looking specifically at BREW, 63% said that one of its major capabilities, offline browsing, would be at least somewhat useful. When some of the specific features of J2ME were described, 38% of respondents said that they might consider purchasing a J2ME handset.

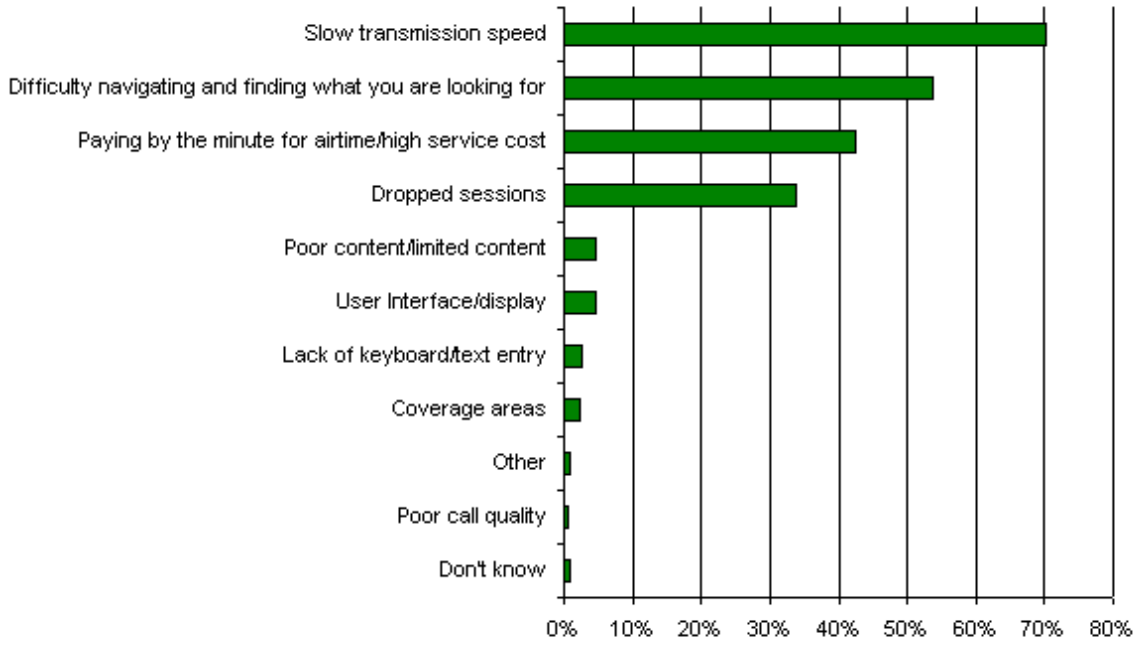
These technologies make a phone more intelligent, and this is important to users. Three out of four panelists say that the functionality of a phone and its ease of use is the most important factor when searching for a new device. It appears that if manufacturers and carriers can communicate the capabilities of WAP, J2ME and BREW to users, they will be widely adopted. It looks like purchasing these products would be a smart thing to do.

Survey Methodology

Data for this article was collected via a brief Internet survey. Participants were e-mailed an invitation to participate in a Web-based survey conducted from January 14th-18th, 2002. Respondents, recruited from Cahners In-Stat/MDR's Technology Adoption panel, were selected because they access the Internet using a wireless telephone or other wireless device. In-Stat's Technology Adoption Panel is a dynamic online group of thousands of technology users and decision-makers interested in contributing opinions and insights about technology usage and issues in the workplace. The panel is recruited from many different sources and is comprised of a diverse group representing a wide range of company sizes, industries, and expertise.

If you are interested in joining the Technology Adoption Panel and/or learning more about it, please go to http://www.instat.com/panels.

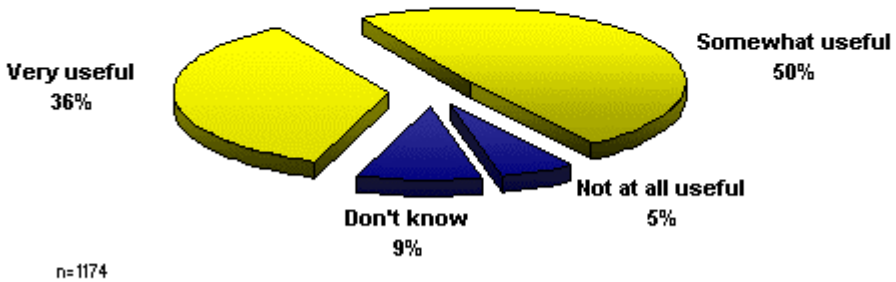
When accessing the Internet from a cellular telephone or other mobile wireless device, which if any, of the following types of things frustrate you the most?



n = 306

Source: Cahners In-Stat/MDR

Both J2ME and BREW-enabled cellular telephones would allow you to download applications and run them locally on your handset without being connected to the network. How useful would this capability be to you?



n=1174

Source: Cahners In-Stat/MDR