Preface

Mobile Internet and smartphones enable communication anywhere and anytime. Furthermore, in combination with social media, they create a new kind of interaction and revolutionize buying behavior, as users increasingly share information about their whereabouts and local offers. This exchange is no longer time-delayed, but shared in real time via the network. The social network, in conjunction with mobile devices, is a companion for all life situations and all topics, which changes the definition of privacy by making part of our lives public. Virtual identities serve as a means of self-expression and are becoming essential, particularly for younger Internet users – termed "digital natives." "People are happy to share information about themselves with others," says Mark Zuckerberg. In this respect, the use of social media can no longer be viewed in isolation. Social media are increasingly used in combination with localization and location-based services (LBS) as well as mobile Internet usage. Such interaction forms the basis for "SoLoMo synergies," which result from social, local, and mobile (SoLoMo) networking and give rise to new opportunities for marketing efficiency. Given that the number of intensive users of smartphones and mobile Internet is set to grow dynamically in the next few years, SoLoMo networking might well increase to the same extent. As of the end of July 2013, 46% of the residential population in Germany already uses a smartphone – according to a recent survey by kaufDA, which will be discussed in detail in this book. The number of smartphone users in Germany exceeded the threshold of 40 million at the start of 2014.

The SoLoMo phenomenon is also fueled by the fact that users want to stay constantly informed online. The same applies today to "smart natives," for whom permanent access to the digital data stream is normal. They demand mobile offers, which they can continuously keep up to date and share with their network. In this regard, local real-time offers with geotargeting, increasing response speeds, real-time information, and augmented reality create interesting mobile added value for SoLoMo users. Added value is undoubtedly provided by online buying and mobile shopping, which is convenient and varied, and can be carried out 24 h, regardless of location. Most customers can no longer imagine a world without online shopping. This is exactly why brick-and-mortar retailing should not get left behind, especially since the Internet has become a central part of many people's lives. Consumers do not want to buy everything online, nor do they want to forego the advantages of the online channel just because they also visit shops. Some companies therefore let

their customers shop in parallel and tie them to the brick-and-mortar store through location-based services. Location-based services (LBS) are mobile services which access localized and situation-based data. These services are becoming largely important, particularly in terms of the situational adequacy of mobile commerce offers. They also have a huge impact on existing commercial and retail structures, since the mobile Internet – in combination with LBS – has become a disruptive technology, which is redefining commerce as a whole.

The "Potential for Location-based services" study, conducted by the eWeb Research Center at Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences (Germany) in collaboration with kaufDA/Bonial International Group, the global provider of location-based advertising services, and in cooperation with the Edelman agency until September 2013, provided the impetus for this book. Our primary aim was to build a bridge between theory and practice and create a user-friendly design. LBS specialists in the Bonial International Group – at international locations in the USA, Germany, France, Russia, and Spain – observed that retailers have identified the explosive nature of increasing mobile Internet usage for their own store and want to develop a better understanding in order to respond with appropriate measures. This book is intended to help close the information gap. The ongoing Delphi study on the subject of the "Future of Commerce," which is being conducted under the auspices of eBay GmbH Deutschland and APCO Worldwide, was also a source of encouragement and support.

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