

Book Review for 1/27/02 by Tae-Hwan Kim

Title: "M Business: The Race to Mobility"

Author: Ravi Kalakota and Marcia Robinson

Length: 302 pages

Price: \$ 24.95

Reading time: 7 hours

Reading rating: 7 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 4 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

Why is Microsoft so focused on transforming itself from a PC firm into a multi-platform infrastructure services company? Why is Intel so intent on transforming itself from a leading microprocessor producer into a manufacturer of mobile networking and communications products? Why is Nokia reinventing itself to become a major player in the mobile economy instead of remaining a narrowly focused cell phone manufacturer? Why is Sony attempting to make on-the-go, in-hand entertainment the next gaming frontier? These are the questions Kalakota and Robinson bring up in the beginning of this book that then proceeds to provide the knowledge that business leaders will need for thriving in the new mobile business (m-business) arena.

In contrast to electronic business (e-business), which generates all of the technological applications and business processes that enable a company to service an electronic commerce (e-commerce) transaction, m-business refers to the application infrastructure required to maintain business relationships and sell information, services, and commodities by means of mobile devices. The authors view the next generation of successful business leaders as those who will embrace the entire mobile concept, rather than a specific product or a service, as the starting point of mobile innovation.

As the authors state, leading organizations like Microsoft, Intel, and Sony are trying to transform themselves while simultaneously creating a shared vision of the mobile future. In explaining this vision, the authors provide comprehensive insights on topics including: 1) emerging business trends such as changing customer service, new enterprise applications, and new technology infrastructure, 2) new business models such as enterprise extension models, location-based service models, real-time supply chain models, and mobile portals, 3) new solution enablers such as voice platforms, mobile platforms, wireless application service providers (WASP), and mobile application integration.

Overall, this book provides convincing analysis of the products and knowledge that business leaders will need to succeed in the m-commerce arena. This book is the first one to clearly explain the m-commerce revolution in the language of a broad business audience.

Mr. Kim is a visiting assistant professor of computer information systems in the College of Business at Western Carolina University. His research interests include electronic commerce, information systems user satisfaction, and intercultural issues in management.