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## WAP technology is not the dead medium that some may suppose

Although its first entry into the market was something of a flop, WAP technology has evolved to offer marketers a platform for delivering media-rich direct content



Whatever happened to WAP? Remember – those tiny icons on minuscule phone screens that were instantly hailed and then almost as quickly rejected as the best way to surf the Internet while on the move.

Hordes of mobile users bought and tried WAP browsing, before deciding that checking and writing emails on a tiny handset was not as hip as it

sounded, and that it was far easier to visit the nearest Internet café. Even the coolest WAP phones (remember the super-cool Nokia 7110?) were only hip until you tried to make sense of WAP on them.

All along, WAP has been a great technology, developed with sensitive protocols, but, like so many new technologies, it has merely been waiting for the right application. And it may be news to those who had their fingers burnt the first time around that WAP

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has surreptitiously found its way back into popular use. If you have ever downloaded a polyphonic ringtone, or been sent a colour 'wallpaper', you have already been using the technology – and, what is more, it works.

The new technology is commonly termed 'WAP-push' and combines the convenience of SMS with the flexibility of WAP. It works by sending a special kind of SMS message to your mobile handset, which then allows the recipient to access media-rich content via a one-key operation.

Unlike the more common MMS, which is hindered by cross-network

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delivery restrictions, WAP-push offers trouble-free accessibility, because it is based on compatible technology.

Marketers are starting to catch on to the idea of WAP-push, largely because it costs the same to send this kind of message to a handset as it does to send a conventional text message. The only possible downside is that the recipient has to pay 'data fees' to their network to download the content, but, importantly, this is still often cheaper than MMS.

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