

From a user's perspective there are a number of alternate ways in the drive for "seamless mobility". One option is to use traditional mobile (phone) networks with more or less nationwide coverage (2G, from late 2001, 2.5G, and some years later fully deployed 3G mobile networks). Another option for mobile users is however to access Wireless LANs ("Hot Spots") now rapidly deployed by a number of actors at airports, hotels, restaurants etc. These "Hot Spots" can already today offer higher capacity (11 Mbit/s), compared to the Kbit/s to be offered by 2.5G/3G mobile networks. A third option now rapidly deployed in the US is represented by "Blackberry", offering low speed, but two-way, e-mail communication. (Somewhat ironically utilizing Mobitex networks originally invented by Telia in Sweden in the early 80s, as a carrier).

There might well be still other options available for users "on the move". To some extent competing as the availability/abundance of low cost WLANs looks bound to depress the volumes and charges mobile operators can expect to derive from "capacity-hungry" applications. (Perhaps especially true in the US, where the option of high-speed data transmission over cell-phone networks is even further ahead, compared to Europe and Japan).

However, there are also possible synergies. In an "Ideal World", users should be able to carry out "seamless sessions" irrespective of which underlying network/infrastructure (2.5G/3G/WLANs etc.) they happen to use while on the move. Using any terminal (mobile "phones", PDAs, laptops etc.). Against this background there is a number of research questions, such as:

- Winners and Losers in the competitive battle between different offers to users "on the move". Where the outcome might well differ between Europe, Japan/Asia/US.
- Regulatory issues - as "traditional cell phone" services and infrastructure are subject to quite heavy regulation in most countries, whereas WLANs and other competing technologies/services are unregulated with close to zero barriers to entry.
- Possible synergies. Can viable commercial solutions be created addressing user requirements for free roaming ("seamless mobility") irrespective of which underlying infrastructure used at any single time?