

By Paul Allen

# Go Mobile, Young Man!

**In the 1860s** Horace Greeley said the future was westward, and in the 1960s Dustin Hoffman was told that it was in plastics. But I think a better word is “mobile.”

Utah is an entrepreneurial state. We have more Inc. 500 companies per capita than almost any other state. There are many angel investors and venture capital firms funding startup companies.

But I have seen surprisingly few startups focused on the mobile Web. Mobile content, mobile advertising, and mobile applications are the next major wave in the evolution of the Internet Economy. I've only seen one mobile

business plan on FundingUniverse.com, out of hundreds that have been submitted by Utah entrepreneurs.

Soon, billions of people will be using cell phones to access the Web. The phone is becoming a powerful, portable personal computer (even more personal than a PC because it's almost never shared) that connects you to people and content wherever you go.

A multi-country study released in March by the Online Publishers Association shows how big the mobile Web is going to be:

“76 percent of all consumers in the U.S. and Western Europe have access to the Web on

their mobile device, and one third use it ... 18 percent internationally expect to spend more time in 2007 on the mobile Web — the U.S. leads the way with 25 percent, followed by Italy and the U.K. Additionally, 41 percent of those without mobile Web access expect to have it on their next mobile device.”

Telephia reported that last June 2006, 34.6 million U.S. cell phone users accessed the Internet from their phone. This number is growing quickly. And when the iPhone takes the world by storm, it will grow even faster.

ABI Research projects that the market for mobile advertising (including search and video ads) will grow from \$3 billion this year to \$19 billion in 2011, including \$9 billion on “broadcast mobile video” ads.

I often hear entrepreneurs tell me about their “great idea” for a new Web site. They are usually unaware that their idea would have been novel several years ago, but if they build their Web site today, they'll be the 50th company doing the same thing.

I'd like to see more Utah entrepreneurs realize that the Web space is extremely crowded in many industries, but that the mobile opportunities are wide open.

Millions of people browse the Web from their phones, but there are very few mobile-friendly Web sites to capture their loyalty.

A recent study of the top 100 most popular Web sites shows that only a small percentage of them are mobile friendly. Visit ready.mobi to see how mobile-ready your own Web site is.

You can also see how your current Web site will look on cell phones by visiting Skweezer.com and then shrinking your browser window.

When your mobile Web site is ready, you use entirely different advertising and marketing strategies to get people to visit your site. AdMob, Third Screen Media, Millennium Media and JumpTap are among the companies that can help you purchase links to your mobile site on other mobile sites. Yahoo announced its own mobile advertising network in March.

I believe a mobile strategy could breathe life into a lot of mature Web companies, and could help launch some new ones. I hope to see more emphasis on the mobile Web in Utah's high-tech circles soon.●

**Paul Allen started Infobases, MyFamily.com, 10x Marketing, LDSAudio, and FundingUniverse. He now runs World Vital Records, teaches Internet marketing at BYU and blogs at paulallen.net.**