

Impact of Non-Latin Script Based Text Messaging on Commodity Price Information Systems in Emerging Markets

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Abstract: This paper investigates and reports on the impact of text messaging and instant messaging technologies with localized Non-Latin writing systems (such as Hindi, Chinese, Arabic, Ethiopic, etc) in commodity price information application in emerging countries. The particular example of Ethiopic script as used in Ethiopia and Eritrea is discussed in this paper and the impact of a study that used Ethiopic text messaging (SMS) and Instant Messaging (IM) to collect and disseminate commodity price information to farmers over a period of several weeks is investigated. Further, the research demonstrates that despite the absence of earlier such models and discouraging infrastructural support in the case country, farmers in key agricultural product growing areas in emerging markets continue to show readiness to embrace modern technology to get equitable prices for their products if information is available in their local writing systems. Coming in a period where many countries around the world continue to experience a runaway inflation in core food items and grains, this study demonstrates that integrated Non-Latin script based commodity price information system has proven useful in providing real-time market information for farmers, traders, economists, and interested policy makers.

Keywords: SMS, IM, Commodity, Non-Latin Scripts, Emerging Markets, m-banking, m-learning, mobile wireless technology, mobile IP, GPRS, unicode, WCDMA, Ethiopic, FeedelSMS, FeedelMessenger.

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