Name of Faculty: Prof. Shubha Mishra & Prof. Kamlesh Chandravanshi

Designation: Assistant Professor

Department: Information Technology

Subject: Wireless Mobile Computing

Unit: IV

Topic: Wireless Application Protocol(WAP)

WAP stands for **W**ireless **A**pplication **P**rotocol. The dictionary definition of these terms are as follows −

- **Wireless** − Lacking or not requiring a wire or wires pertaining to radio transmission.
- **Application** − A computer program or piece of computer software that is designed to do a specific task.
- **Protocol** − A set of technical rules about how information should be transmitted and received using computers.

WAP is the set of rules governing the transmission and reception of data by computer applications on or via wireless devices like mobile phones. WAP allows wireless devices to view specifically designed pages from the Internet using only plain text and very simple black-and-white pictures.

WAP is a standardized technology for cross-platform, distributed computing very similar to the Internet's combination of Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), except that it is optimized for:

- low-display capability
- low-memory
- low-bandwidth devices, such as personal digital assistants (PDAs), wireless phones, and pagers.

WAP is designed to scale across a broad range of wireless networks like GSM, IS-95, IS-136, and PDC.

Who is behind WAP?

The Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) is a result of joint efforts taken by companies teaming up in an industry group called WAP Forum (www.wapforum.org).

On June 26, 1997, Ericsson, Motorola, Nokia, and Unwired Planet took the initiative to start a rapid creation of a standard for making advanced services within the wireless domain a reality. In December 1997, WAP Forum was formally created and after the release of the WAP 1.0 specifications in April 1998, WAP Forum membership was opened to all.

The WAP Forum now has over 500 members and represents over 95 percent of the global handset market. Companies such as Nokia, Motorola and Ericsson are all members of the forum.

The objective of the forum is to create a license-free standard that brings information and telephony services to wireless devices.

Why is WAP Important?

Until the first WAP devices emerged, the Internet was a Internet and a mobile phone was a mobile phone. You could surf the Net, do serious research, or be entertained on the Internet using your computer, but this was limited to your computer.

Now with the appearance of WAP, the scene is that we have the massive information, communication, and data resources of the Internet becoming more easily available to anyone with a mobile phone or communications device.

WAP being open and secure, is well suited for many different applications including, but not limited to stock market information, weather forecasts, enterprise data, and games.

Despite the common misconception, developing WAP applications requires only a few modifications to existing web applications. The current set of web application development tools will easily support WAP development, and in the future more development tools will be announced.

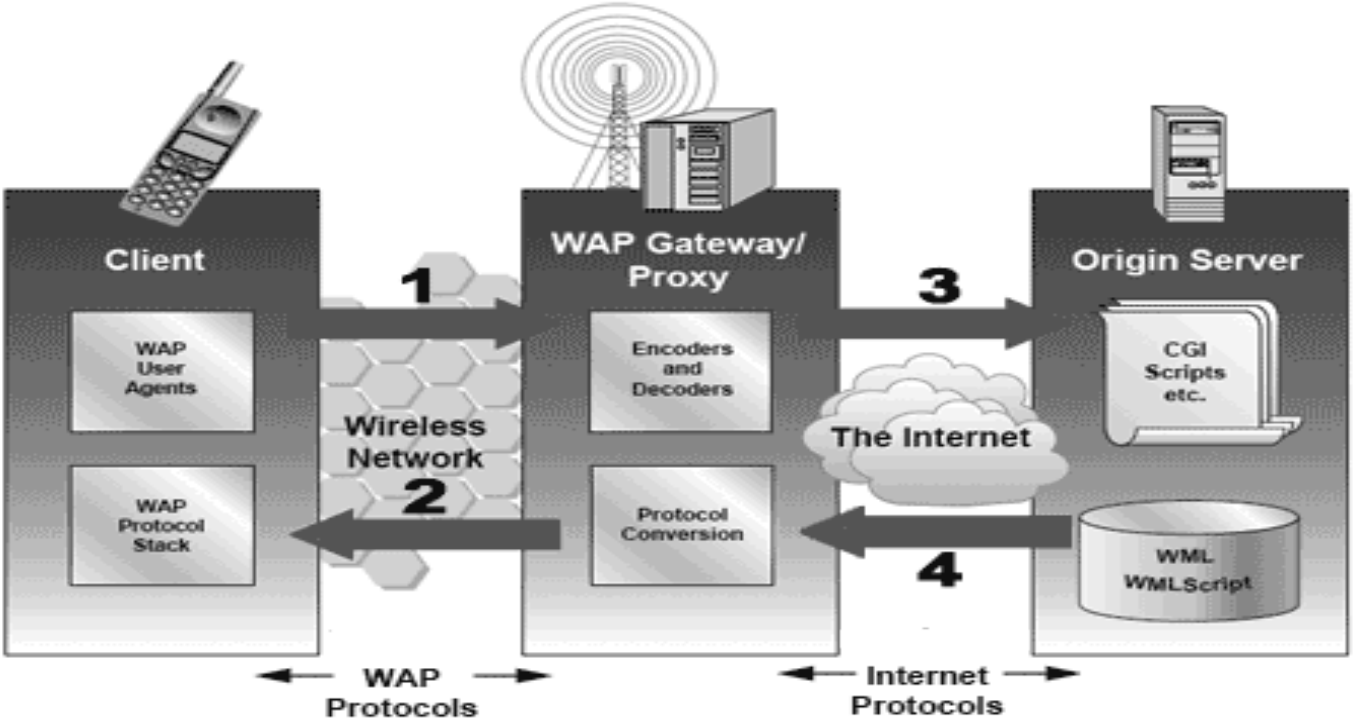
WAP Microbrowser

To browse a standard internet site you need a web browser. Similar way to browse a WAP enables website, you would need a micro browser. A Micro Browser is a small piece of software that makes minimal demands on hardware, memory and CPU. It can display information written in a restricted mark-up language called WML. Although, tiny in memory footprint it supports many features and is even scriptable.

Today, all the WAP enabled mobile phones or PDAs are equipped with these micro browsers so that you can take full advantage of WAP technology.

The WAP Model

The figure below shows the WAP programming model. Note, the similarities with the Internet model. Without the WAP Gateway/Proxy, the two models would have been practically identical.



1 -- WSP Request (URL)
2 -- WSP Response (Binary WML)
3 -- HTTP Request (URL)
3 -- HTTP Response (WML)

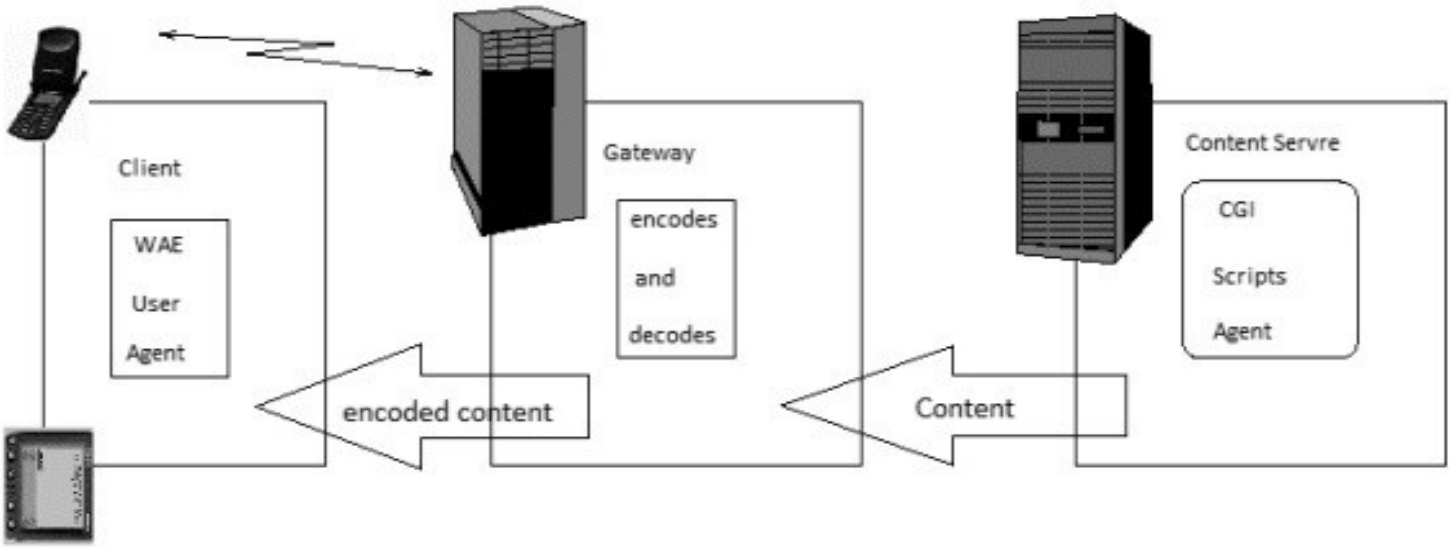
WAP Gateway/Proxy is the entity that connects the wireless domain with the Internet. You should make a note that the request that is sent from the wireless client to the WAP Gateway/Proxy uses the Wireless Session Protocol (WSP). In its essence, WSP is a binary version of HTTP.

A **markup language** − the Wireless Markup Language (WML) has been adapted to develop optimized WAP applications. In order to save valuable bandwidth in the wireless network, WML can be encoded into a compact binary format. Encoding WML is one of the tasks performed by the WAP Gateway/Proxy.

How WAP Model Works?

When it comes to actual use, WAP works as follows −

- The user selects an option on their mobile device that has a URL with Wireless Markup language (WML) content assigned to it.
- The phone sends the URL request via the phone network to a WAP gateway using the binary encoded WAP protocol.
- The gateway translates this WAP request into a conventional HTTP request for the specified URL and sends it on to the Internet.
- The appropriate Web server picks up the HTTP request.
- The server processes the request just as it would any other request. If the URL refers to a static WML file, the server delivers it. If a CGI script is requested, it is processed and the content returned as usual.
- The Web server adds the HTTP header to the WML content and returns it to the gateway.
- The WAP gateway compiles the WML into binary form.
- The gateway then sends the WML response back to the phone.
- The phone receives the WML via the WAP protocol.
- The micro-browser processes the WML and displays the content on the screen.



WAP Architecture

WAP is designed in a layered fashion, so that it can be extensible, flexible, and scalable. As a result, the WAP protocol stack is divided into five layers −

Layers of WAP Protocol

Application Layer

Wireless Application Environment (WAE). This layer is of most interest to content developers because it contains among other things, device specifications, and the content development programming languages, WML, and WMLScript.

Session Layer

Wireless Session Protocol (WSP). Unlike HTTP, WSP has been designed by the WAP Forum to provide fast connection suspension and reconnection.

Transaction Layer

Wireless Transaction Protocol (WTP). The WTP runs on top of a datagram service, such as User Datagram Protocol (UDP) and is part of the standard suite of TCP/IP protocols used to provide a simplified protocol suitable for low bandwidth wireless stations.

Security Layer

Wireless Transport Layer Security (WTLS). WTLS incorporates security features that are based upon the established Transport Layer Security (TLS) protocol standard. It includes data integrity checks, privacy, service denial, and authentication services.

Transport Layer

Wireless Datagram Protocol (WDP). The WDP allows WAP to be bearer-independent by adapting the transport layer of the underlying bearer. The WDP presents a consistent data format to the higher layers of the WAP protocol stack, thereby offering the advantage of bearer independence to application developers.

Each of these layers provides a well-defined interface to the layer above it. This means that the internal workings of any layer are transparent or invisible to the layers above it. The layered architecture allows other applications and services to utilise the features provided by the WAP-stack as well. This makes it possible to use the WAP-stack for services and applications that currently are not specified by WAP.

The WAP protocol architecture is shown below alongside a typical Internet Protocol stack.

Note that the mobile network bearers in the lower part of the figure above are not part of the WAP protocol stack.