

# **Next Big Thing At Informex**

## **Contract chemistry and service firms rise to the challenge of the "Life Sciences Age"**

### **Dr. Canton Interviewed by Chemical & Engineering News**

Keynote speaker James Canton, founder of the [Institute for Global Futures](#), a San Francisco think tank, kicked off the [Synthetic Organic Chemical Manufacturers Association's](#) recent [Informex](#) conference with a frenetic explication of "tomorrow" that belonged exactly where it happened--on the Las Vegas strip. His multimedia package of megatrends hinged on a prediction that the life sciences will usurp information technology (IT) as the crucible for innovation and societal change over the next five to eight years, thus making Informex attendees the business "rock stars" of this decade.

According to Canton, the ascendance of life sciences is spurred by a convergence of chemical synthesis and biology, specifically in the development of the lifestyle enhancement drugs that baby boomers demand.

Contract manufacturing and research firms at Informex--many of which are still working through the fine chemicals bust of the 1990s--might buy a version of Canton's vision in which drugs of the future target AIDS, cancer, and central nervous system disorders in addition to panic attacks and erectile dysfunction. They also seem receptive to the speaker's warning that the sector will experience a life sciences version of the "digital Darwinism" encountered by IT firms not long ago: They will have to "innovate, adapt, or die," Canton said.

Excerpted from Chemical Engineering News article by Rick Mullin