

Dr. Canton Predicts that Real-Time Wireless Information Will Change Business

By Shanti Bergel

(SAN DIEGO, Calif.) -- Delivering the keynote speech on the final day of the BREW Developer Conference, James Canton, founder and CEO of the Institute for Global Futures, stressed the key role that wireless technologies will play in improving both private and professional lives.

San Diego-based Qualcomm is the driving force behind Binary Runtime Environment for Wireless (BREW), the company's ambitious end-to-end software development and business framework for the wireless data industry.

Broadly defined, Canton predicted that this mobile commerce market would be worth US\$47 billion by 2010.

"By 2005, 1 billion people will be online and of that number 70% of them will be on wireless systems," he said.

"How can you participate in that wireless future?" he inquired of the attending audience of mobile software developers.

"Real-time global information is what will change business and peoples' lifestyles," he said. "We need a lifestyle transaction enabler."

Observing the ever-increasing pace of innovation in the wake of previous technical advances such as the telegraph and the personal computer, Canton predicted a similar phenomenon as more people around the world fold mobile devices into the pattern of their daily lives. As wireless devices have the effect of making people available in real-time, they stimulate continual collaboration resulting in what he called an "innovation time-span collapse."

"Unlike previous technologies, wireless transforms lifestyles," he said.

In short, he assured the crowd that the greatest era of technical innovation is not in the past but rather in the future. The key to remaining competitive in this hyper-collaborative future is to focus on the customer and help improve his or her life, he said.

Illustrating his vision with video clips from science fiction movies such as Johnny Mnemonic, Canton identified seven distinct converging influences on the wireless future: increased personal mobility, acceptance of the Internet by business, wireless entertainment, broadband wireless, global consumer adoption, interactive multimedia communications, and an integrated payments infrastructure.

Of these, he stressed that interactive multimedia and streaming video will be the keys to widespread global adoption.