

Mobiles hold key to progress

Futurephile

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Nagesh Challa, futurologist and founder of Silicon Valley-based mobile and chip company Ecrio, unveils his predictions

How will IT change?

Business users will have a much better experience of IT with more one-touch commands that go away and do things in the background. BlackBerry and iPhone e-mail devices are showing us the way – but this kind of usability will come to the desktop.

What will business IT look like in 2012?

Looking up information on mobiles will get easier and the networks will get much faster. As a result, mobile data use will soar.

What will be new in public sector IT in 2012?

Combined video and audio on mobiles will become important from a safety and security standpoint. Tools such as mobile videotelephony will be especially useful in emergency situations, providing officials with better visual aids.

How will individuals use IT in 2012?

It won't just be individuals but also devices that use mobile networks more in 2012. For example, our electricity meters could link to the grid through mobile devices that provide real-time updates on how much we are spending.

What will business IT look like in 2020?

I think we'll see a move to utility computing, where we request processing power as and when we need it. But for this to take off, people will need to feel comfortable that their data is secure. I think there'll be tremendous improvements in IT security.

What about the public sector in 2020?

Having technology reach and benefit all communities in developing countries such as India – rather than just big cities – would be simply amazing.

How will IT be used by individuals in 2020?

There'll be much more use of mobile payment. You can already buy a metro ticket or things from a convenience store in Japan, but imagine when you have a global system. Then I'll be able to arrive in London and buy an Oyster card for the Tube or pay for a taxi and I won't

have to worry about running out of foreign currency.

Will we see more user-generated content?

Social networking and user-generated content will merge. So we'll see more sharing of user-generated video on sites like Facebook plus longer films. We'll be watching more video on mobiles too and interacting with it or commenting on it.

How will technology get easier to use?

In the future, technology will be designed to overcome users' bad habits. Back-ups of the phone numbers in your mobile will be made without you asking and your mobile and PC contact books will be synchronised automatically.

What else will go digital?

There'll be a lot more digitisation of the human voice. At Ecrio, we've developed software for adding a digitised voice message to any e-mail. It's great for communicating with loved ones, adding tone of voice to an e-mail, or for when you're too tired to type. I expect to see an explosion in digital speech technology generally. More mundane things like discount coupons in newspapers will go digital too.

What will happen in 2050 and beyond?

Today you need a big turbine to generate enough electricity to be useful for a data centre. But nanotechnology will change all that. The power needed to drive and cool a miniature chip will be substantially less. By simply walking or talking, you might be able to generate enough wind power to run a future mobile computer.



Nagesh Challa: one-touch IT