The Future: Trendspotting

Technology keeps changing – but all of the changes point to the need for more bandwidth. Here are the trends to watch.

By Caitlin Clinard ■ *Connexion Technologies*

Connexion Technologies focuses on the future. Every day, behind the scenes, its innovative team of employees works to stay ahead of the times. It strives to keep developers one step ahead of their competition. By researching consumer trends and investing resources on a daily basis, Connexion Technologies prevents its developer partners from becoming obsolete.

This month, Connexion Technologies' Glen Lang, Founder, and Tolga Erkmen, Vice President of Product Planning, share with us their technology projections for the future. How will home technology change over the next 10 years?

Trend 1: A single data pipe

"Whoever can simplify this complex environment will be the winner," says Tolga Erkmen.

Erkmen says the answer to making the future simpler is one data pipe. Currently, service providers build their own infrastructures and provide their services over them. The cable company has a network and the telephone company has one, too. They each charge residents for the services they deliver over their own infrastructures. If they're the only ones with a network that passes your house, then they're your only option. This setup leaves residents with little, if any, flexibility in their choice of service provider.

Erkmen sees a future that holds a different scenario. A single network pipe could eventually pass each residence. Instead of residents having to pay for multiple low-capacity networks and individual services, they'll pay for this robust pipe. Service providers will pay to deliver their services over the network, keeping rates competitive because residents will now be able to shop around for their services and pay for only one infrastructure fee.

"All we'll have to give our customers is a high-capacity network and then they can subscribe to any service from anywhere over the Net," says Erkmen.

Trend 2: Targeted Advertising

Until the 1970s, television was primarily advertising-based. People received it free over the air because advertisers paid for it. With the advent of cable, consumers began to pay to obtain more stations and variety. Now, with Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) on the horizon, a new environment may be possible.

"Content will be viewable in two ways," predicts Glen Lang. "If you're willing to watch advertisements, then you'll receive cable free and if you'd rather not watch them, then you'll pay for your content."

In the future, advertising revenue might once again pay for the delivery of video. With the invention of addressable set-top boxes, advertisers can now target their audiences, making them more willing to pay top dollar for advertising.

"Targeted advertising means that set-top boxes can recognize the shows being watched and target advertisements to a certain demographic," says Lang. "The grandmother who watches Lifetime and the father who watches ESPN will get a different set of advertisements from the mother watching the cooking channel and the child watching cartoons."

Join us next month for a recap of Connexion Technologies' innovative techniques. Understand what this company does to keep its developers ahead of their competition. Witness the opportunities fiber can bring to homebuilders/developers/residents.

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Trend 3: Telephone with Video

Within the next 10 years, most telephone calls will come with video capabilities. Lang says all telephone sets will have small LCD screens that residents can turn on and off depending on their desire to see and be seen.

Erkmen agrees that telephone as we know it will change, too. He predicts that plain old telephone service (POTS) will be free. His vision of the big data pipe fits into this scenario. Because a telephone works by simply transferring data, Erkmen says it will cost service providers more to bill the service than provide it. Therefore, residents will be charged for the use of the infrastructure and other services. Telephone will come with it.

Trend 4: Device-Independent Content

Lang also predicts that more content will be device independent. Consider, for example, that music files in MP3 format can be played on PCs, home stereos and car stereos alike. That's because the files are written in a standard format.

Erkmen explains that, in the past, proprietary content has not survived in the market. When vendors fight to push their individual formats, consumers don't know which one to pick, and they stall on their decisions.

"Proprietary formats slow down the mass acceptance of technology. In an age where trends dominate, standardization is key to accelerating the market's acceptance of a new technology."

He sees a future where content formats will be standardized. Consumers will get the content that they want, when they want it, on whatever devices they see fit.

Trend 5: Blogging

There's one trend where Lang and Erkmen have different predictions.

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"The importance and use of blogs for mass dissemination of information will dramatically diminish," Lang says. "There is just way too much content and no credibility in today's blogosphere."

Lang says sorting through content to find credible information has become too time consuming and that people don't want to edit the material they read. That's why he thinks that credible sources will become more valued again.

Erkmen, on the other hand, predicts that as technology advances, the future will see more user-generated content.

"People like producing and sharing their own materials," Erkmen says. "Although blogging and YouTube may change their forms and quality, user-generated content will increase."

Conclusion

And then there's that prediction that seems rather obvious…

"In the future, everything will be on demand," says Lang. "Linear broadcast as we know it will fall away as DVRs take over."

"Most services will be delivered over the Internet and on demand," agrees Erkmen.

What do these trends mean, and why are they relevant to developers? They all point to the need for more and more bandwidth and to the inadequacy of the coaxial cable infrastructures in the ground today. That's why Connexion Technologies is building networks that are ready for the future – so consumers will be able to make decisions based on their desires instead of their network limitations.

In the meantime, Connexion Technologies continues to work hard for its customers to deploy a technology platform that will not become outdated. Because fiber optic technology has virtually unlimited bandwidth, a fiber-to-the-home connection can handle emerging technologies as they come to market. And Connexion Technologies can fulfill its goal: differentiating its partners and keeping them ahead of their competition. **BBP**

About the Author

Caitlin Clinard is Press and Media Coordinator for Connexion Technologies, which designs, builds and operates fiber networks in single-family, multifamily, high-rise, resort and hospitality properties from coast to coast. For questions concerning this article, please contact Stephanie Wetzel, Corporate Marketing Manager, at swetzel@cnxntech.com. See also www.connexiontechnologies.net.