Wireless Trends and Predictions for 2008

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During the holiday break, I was able to finally get my inbox under control (well sort of) maybe organized is a more operative word. While perusing through the subject lines, I was particularly surprised by the number of emails I received listing the top technology predictions/trends for 2008. Although the predictions covered a variety of topics, running from global warming and the energy crisis to social networking, a few trends in particular popped up in several different listings.

Here are five predictions that caught my eye and could potentially have a direct impact on the wireless industry in 2008:

1. Open access will provide new and innovative services.
2. Wireless broadband will continue to be the fastest-growing service. HSDPA will dominate until LTE goes commercial, and it will be embedded in laptops for wireless connectivity.
3. Peer to peer will become mainstream technology. U.S. distributors will start using next-generation, secure, and digital rights management-protected P2P to distribute content.
4. The use of femtocells will be an enabler to help spread cellular coverage inside of buildings.
5. Flash-based storage, whose cost/GB is approaching magnetic disks, offers the additional benefits of improved performance, higher storage densities, and lower power consumption.

There were also a couple of trends that seemed to weave through everyone’s predictions in one form or another: Globalization, Security and Global Warming. Without a doubt, globalization will increase at an unprecedented rate in 2008. Business will continue to add workers, offices and facilities around the world that will depend on high performance networks to enable applications they need to be productive. These networks must operate securely and reliably regardless of where users are located. As the amount of data transferred continues to escalate, companies will not only need to keep track of their data location, but how to best protect it. Security will remain a number one concern in 2008. Global warming and the energy crisis will continue to have major impacts as well. Some predict that 2008 will be the year where LEDs become common for lighting, and new forms of energy storage will become available.

It may be a little premature at this time to summarize a complete list of technology predictions for 2008, but one prediction is a given — 2008 promises to be just as eventful as 2007, starting with the FCC's spectrum auction this month. By the end of 2008, we may be looking at devices with embedded Wireless USB technology, and the final ratification of the next-generation 802.11n Wi-Fi standard.

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