

Critical Business Trends, Bluetooth-Enabled Prosthetics and Virtual Classrooms



Apr 9, 2008, By Karen Stewartson

Critical Factors

Deloitte's 2008 Industry Outlook: A Look Around the Corner predicts eight business trends that will cut across multiple sectors of the U.S. economy, including state and local governments:

- Globalization
- Convergence
- Environmental sustainability
- Rising energy and health-care costs
- Transparency
- Technology use and integration
- The 2008 presidential election
- Talent management

Bluetooth-Enabled

The Bluetooth technology used in hands-free cell phones also is helping Marine Lance Cpl. Joshua Bleill walk again after he lost both his legs above the knees while on patrol in Iraq.

Computer chips in each leg send signals to motors in the joints of his artificial legs so the knees and ankles move coordinatively. Bleill's prosthetics have Bluetooth receivers strapped to the ankle. The Bluetooth device on each leg tells the other leg what it's doing and how it's moving - whether walking, standing or climbing steps.

Bluetooth is a short-range wireless technology that connects cell phones to ear pieces, computers to printers and MP3 players to speakers. Like many electronics used today, Bleill's must be charged overnight. - [Cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)

Fuel Up

Dutch inventors developed a car-fueling robot, called Tankpitstop, that registers an automobile when it arrives at the gas station and matches the car to a database of fuel cap designs and fuel types. A robotic arm fitted with multiple sensors extends from the gas pump, carefully opens the car's flap, unscrews the cap, picks up the fuel nozzle and directs it toward the tank opening, much like a human arm.

Tankpitstop costs \$111,100 and works for any car with a keyless fuel tank and whose contours and

dimensions have been recorded to avoid scratching. - [Newlaunches.com](#)

Back to School

Project management training provider ESI International launched its Virtual Classroom, which lets students train with an instructor in real time through an online environment. With microphones and instant messaging, students can hear the instructor's explanations, ask questions, speak with one another and divide into virtual breakout rooms.

Every virtual classroom course is recorded so students can review information. They also can download course reference materials and tools, as well as access pre- and post-course surveys and assessments.

Managing Projects, ESI's most popular course, is the first virtual classroom offering. It's currently available for ESI's on-site clients, and public course offerings are scheduled to begin this month. - [Esi-intl.com](#)

Survey Says

Despite steep increases in data breaches and malware infections, remote workers worldwide express confidence in Internet security. According to a new survey of more than 1,000 Web users in 10 countries, only responders in Italy and Germany said the Internet was less safe in 2007 than it was in 2006.

According to the annual survey commissioned by Cisco Systems, 56 percent of remote workers using enterprise PCs to access the Internet said their perception of security increased in 2007. In 2006, 48 percent said they felt the Internet was safe. The most significant gains were made in the United States (60 percent), China (64 percent) and Brazil (71 percent). - [Baselinemag.com](#)

CIA Watches YouTube

In keeping with its intelligence-gathering mandate, the CIA is watching YouTube.

Under the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), U.S. spies have become major consumers of social media.

"We're looking at YouTube, which carries some unique and honest-to-goodness intelligence," said Doug Naquin, director of the DNI Open Source Center (OSC), in remarks to the Central Intelligence Retirees' Association last October. "We're looking at chat rooms and things that didn't exist five years ago and trying to stay ahead. We have groups looking at what they call Citizens Media: people taking pictures with their cell phones and posting them on the Internet."

In November 2005, the OSC subsumed the CIA's Foreign Broadcast Information Service, which housed the agency's foreign media analysts. The OSC is responsible for collecting and analyzing public information, including Internet content. - [Informationweek.com](#)

Data Dilemma

British public opinion is evenly split on national identity cards - 47 percent think they're a good idea while 50 percent think not.

The survey of more than 1,000 people looked at attitudes toward several proposed government IT projects, including a database of all UK children, a central register of personal information and fingerprints to support identification cards, and a database of information on British travelers.

Proposals on data sharing between government agencies were the most unpopular: 52 percent of respondents felt uncomfortable with them. Proposals to collect information on British citizens entering or leaving the country were more popular as 67 percent were in favor.

Research from the Home Office, Britain's government organization responsible for combating terrorism and crime, showed 73 percent of people in favor of identification card proposals in 2005, compared to 17 percent opposed and 10 percent neutral. - *The Register*