



Wireless Broadband Takes Center Stage

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Last week in Las Vegas, thousands of industry professionals, innovators, and visionary leaders converged to display and discuss the transformative power of emerging wireless devices. With wireless penetration already at 100%, industry luminaries predict wireless adoption will soar far beyond this ceiling, offering impressive capabilities that will improve efficiency and even reduce our carbon footprint.

What will next-generation wireless integration mean to our lives and our society? Verizon Chairman and CEO Ivan Seidenberg painted a compelling picture of this future when he said we're "about to enter a new era where wireless will connect everything: not just people-to-people, but also people-to-machine and machine-to-machine. Cars, appliances, buildings, roads, sensors, medical monitors, someday even inventories on supermarket shelves, all have the potential to become inherently intelligent, perpetually connected nodes on the mobile web." Thanks to mobile tools that tackle everything from energy conservation to patient care, this technology has surpassed mere entertainment and entered the realm of substantive social change.

A panel exploring wireless in everyday life delved deeper into this theme. The main question under debate: how do you deliver broadband to the masses when millions of Americans continue to say no to high-speed Internet, despite having multiple choices? A range of interesting ideas addressed how to unleash broadband's considerable benefits to a greater number of Americans. One Economy's Rey Ramsey suggested that U.S. policy makers must not only address tech literacy, but also ensure that new public housing developments and renovations include wiring for broadband. AT&T's Jim Cicconi, Senior EVP of External and Legislative Affairs, stressed the importance of private sector broadband investment, which exceeded \$60 billion last year alone. Combined with the company's tech literacy outreach to seniors and its plans to offer a new \$50 "netbook," AT&T hopes to help overcome the hurdles that keep some from embracing broadband. Arkansas PSC Commissioner Collette Honorable emphasized the critical role of innovative partnerships like Connect Arkansas to overcome tech literacy challenges.

Even former vice president Al Gore was on hand to underscore the green benefits of mobile technology. In addition to calling for investment in green infrastructure, Gore specifically emphasized the importance of smart-grid technologies that use broadband to run utilities far more efficiently. Companies on the exhibit floor echoed the green theme

– showcasing everything from solar-powered handsets to a phone made from recycled water bottles.

With providers investing billions in infrastructure each year, and consumers craving next-generation wireless innovations, the power and breadth of broadband will only continue to increase exponentially.

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