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## **Predicting Information Technology Trends**

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# Predicting information technology trends

It's time for another attempt at predicting information technology trends you will have to deal with in the next few years.

We tend to overestimate the amount of change that will come in the next 10 years, while we underestimate the amount of change that will come in the next 12 months.

IT is no exception to this rule. As an urban legend goes, Bill Gates once famously stated we would never have a need for more than 640 K of RAM. Of course, if we did not use Microsoft Windows as our operating system, that might be true.

Thomas Watson, chairman of IBM in 1943, predicted there would be a world market for, maybe, five computers. So you see, predicting IT trends is a risky business, but I welcome the challenge again.



Kevin Lee Elder

**Prediction 1: Green computing.**

Audi had what I thought was one of the funnier ads during the Super Bowl this year with their green police advertisement in the fourth quarter. The green police were after everyone for such atrocities as using plastic bags, plastic bottles or not composting your fruit rinds.

While it most likely won't come to this, corporations do need to have a green component to their business. Public relations and customer relationship management are two important components of any IT strategy, and adding a green computing thread to these is only going to be an even smarter business move this year.

You can cut down on travel costs with telecommuting and teleconferencing. You can save paper and trees, and thus costs, with e-documents. All of these will cut down on our carbon footprint, which won't cool the planet, but will be a good public relations move.

Organizations will need to begin this year to learn how to incorporate social computing into their business model.

**Prediction 2: Social computing at work.**

While seemingly everyone under the age of 30 is on MySpace, Facebook and several other social networking sites for pleasure, most companies have spent years placing a firewall between work systems and this technology.

Work policies prohibiting access to social computing sites have grown quite common. Companies will need to do a 180-degree turn on this one.

Organizations will need to begin this year to learn how to incorporate social computing into their business model. You are already seeing progressive businesses using Facebook pages to interact with their client base.

I predict you will see more companies determine how

they can use social networking at work. Help desks, human resource management and other common business functions will use more social networking tools this year as a common business practice.

Sites like LinkedIn have proven that hiring can be greatly improved with social computing aspects built in.

**Prediction 3: I have to have a hardware prediction, which is always risky, so I will play it safe and predict technology will continue to get smaller, cheaper, faster and have more capacity.**

OK, that is too easy.

How about more Flash Memory in use this year? Flash Memory is not new, but the prices will continue to drop and companies will find more

and better uses for it over the older spinning drive forms of data storage.

As the price drops and performance improves, its usage will increase 100 percent or more. With that increase will come the ever present security risks that must be dealt with as massive amounts of corporate data wanders about in the pockets of employees.

I saw an article this morning about cars of the future powering themselves with solar roofs and doors. Scientists at Imperial College London are working with Volvo on a \$4.6 million project to develop a new material that could store and discharge electricity in future hybrid vehicles.

I will leave those reports and Apple iPad predictions to those who can see farther into the future than me.

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