



## Local contingent brings its wares to wireless fest

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**BY STEVE LUNDIN**

NEW ORLEANS -- CDMA, GSM, 3G and 4G might be techno-babble to the layman, but the surprise appearance of uber-entrepreneur Sean "P Diddy" Combs at the wireless industry's top show here this week sent a message everyone understands: Content and delivery are the wireless industry's prime mantras.

As wireless devices become mobile playstations, the convergence of Hollywood and telecommunications is truly the ultimate revenge of the nerds.

Combs, who refers to his fans as his "millions of product subscribers," represents huge new revenue streams for carriers, content providers and the hardware companies that support the new untethered lifestyles.

The Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association show is the industry's annual international showplace for all things telecom, attracting close to 800 companies.

Mark Hickey, publisher of Telephone, Wireless Review and Mobile Radio Technology magazine, one of the baker's dozen of Chicago companies exhibiting in a show that covers more than 15 football fields of space, said, "The wireless industry is dynamic and growing. Phones are now multi-media devices with media companies like ESPN developing specific content for them.

Change coming faster than rules can be written

The first question asked of anyone returning from the Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association show is always, "What phone should I buy next?"

This year's final conflict will be between smart phones and voice-enabled personal digital assistants.

Look within for the answer. Remember that all the downloadable dial tones, games, text messages, Web browsers, e-mail, GPS (yes, maps are coming to your phone), photos, streaming video and miscellaneous content comes with a price.

You'll pay by the byte, and help P. Diddy fuel his next venture.

Determine what *you* want to pull out of your pocket, and don't sign a contract that locks you into anything for too long. With the advent of WiMAX and innovations like Skype coming your way, the playing field is changing faster than the rules can be written.

--*Steve Lundin*

Among the Chicago area contingent:

\*Motorola unveiled a host of new, sleek, user-friendly products.

Riding the style wave generated by the slick RAZR phone, Motorola rolled out the V280, a budget-minded, non-clamshell version of the RAZR with video capture, Bluetooth, push-to-talk capability and advanced messaging capabilities.

Motorola also released the RAZRWire, a pair of Oakley sunglasses fitted with a Bluetooth headset.

Indicative of a potential trend, there was a flurry of interest in Motorola's M900 and Spirit CDMA 1X fixed mobile car phones, previously available only in Europe. These oversized phones are permanently installed in a vehicle, and users simply slip their current phone's sim card in- to a side slot, and *voila*, they are in compliance with local ordinances that might restrict the use of a hand-held cell phone while driving.

\*Jabra products are familiar to anyone who has purchased a headset or earbud. This year, the company introduced two hot new Bluetooth products, the BT 800, which took home a Best of Show from Pocket PC magazine at CES, and the companion BT 500. The new crop of Bluetooth-enabled headsets feature talk times of up to 8 hours and standby times of a whopping 240 hours.

They pair to a user's device with one touch, and are slimmer and lighter than earlier generation models. Still wearing a wired headset? Flag down the nearest Amvets truck and donate it before anyone important sees you.

\*Bridgeport Networks displayed another interesting trend in the move to sever relationships with copper line carriers: the MobileVoIP convergence technology solution. Bridgeport will enable users to extend single-identity phone service over multiple access networks including mobile, cable, DSL and Wi-Fi. The network is in trials in Canada.

\*Telular forecasts that 18 million U.S. wired users will permanently unhook their traditional phone services by 2007 because of products like its Phonicell terminals. Phonicells give enterprise and homeowners the ability to use a cellular network virtually anywhere, with any device. Plug the Phonicell into a phone jack, and every wire-dependent device in a home or business can take advantage of cellular service.

The company currently has a service agreement with Sprint.

\*Xentris, a spin-out from Andrew Corp., is a private-label provider of all accessories cellular for big guns like Verizon and other brand name companies. Its plug-and-play headsets will retrofit any car into a hands-free Bluetooth environment. Xentris is also providing OEM car manufacturers with Bluetooth for this fall's model years.

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