

**- M2M is gaining ground in the B2C market -
500 billion objects soon to be connected by M2M?
“A sluggish start for wireless M2M” as stated by some newspapers?
The truth lies somewhere in between.**

At the present time, 10 ‘traditional’ applications account for 80% of worldwide projects. They are characterised as mainly being B2B (fleet management, remote billboard maintenance, remote metering, industrial machine maintenance, financial transactions, polling etc...), and all enjoy solid business success. Thirty to forty million objects are connected worldwide each year and the volume is steadily increasing (by 20% to 30% each year).

But we are still a long way from the 1.5 billion mobile phones that are sold each year and from the 4 billion connectable objects.

We might get there, though. All over the world, new applications for consumers are emerging that use wireless technology in volumes that are potentially 10 to 100 times higher than for industrial applications. Here are some examples: remote nursing solutions allowing patients to be treated at home; environmentally-friendly applications (management and optimisation of the energy consumption of buildings and individual homes, etc.); security applications (intruder alarms, affordable trackers to protect against vehicle theft, collaborative radar detection systems in real time, etc.); and finally, applications to manage everyday objects (digital packages, multimedia, television decoders, etc.).

In order to make these new B2C applications a reality, almost everything has to be reinvented from scratch in terms of tools and processes. In the interest of B2B security and reliability, B2C requires systems that are genuinely scalable (to absorb the “shock” of having several million objects connected) along with processes that enable the launch of such systems to be automated. The ease with which they can be rolled out, and the ease with which the general public can use them, are the two crucial criteria.

For us, this involves mastering techniques derived from WEB 2.0, as well as new on-board environments (Eclipse, LUA), and new technology such as on embedded SIM which combines added security with automated device activation. A large dose of creativity is needed on top of all that! If it is used effectively, this combination can make wireless technology wonderfully simple to use and incredibly efficient!

When it was invented, the telephone was seen as a toy, providing scientific amusement and nothing more. GPS was reserved for the military. SMS was only supposed to be for network maintenance (in the event of a fault with signalling). But of course it has all turned out quite differently - 7 trillion SMS were sent in 2007. M2M “for consumers” will certainly include products and services that are very different from what we might have imagined, and they will quickly become part of our everyday lives. There’s plenty of room for innovation!

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