

2011 Business Technology Trends

The web is now buzzing with 2011 forecasts for business and technology trends. Analysts and industry experts from all over are offering their thoughts on what will be the top trends and opportunities for businesses in the New Year.

Pulled from business headlines, the following are three of the business technology buzzwords to look out for in 2011. These trends are getting a lot of web ink and although they are not new, many say they are definitely poised to boom in the coming year.

1. Cloud Computing

Cloud computing is an internet-based computing system in which shared resources, software, and information are provided to computers and other devices on demand. Most cloud computing infrastructures consist of services delivered via common centers and built on servers. Information technology research firm Gartner Inc. places cloud computing among its Top 10 Strategic Technologies for 2011, saying that “vendors will offer packaged private cloud implementations that deliver the vendor’s public cloud service technologies (software and/or hardware) and methodologies (i.e., best practices to build and run the service) in a form that can be implemented inside the consumer’s enterprise.”

2. Social Media

Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are household names now and social media will continue its roll in the foreseeable future. Some of the social media trends expected to grow in 2011 include:

- Social commerce – businesses selling their products and services through user interaction on social media sites. Examples include customer ratings and reviews, user recommendations and referrals, forums and communities, and social advertising.
- Group buying websites (see Groupon, LivingSocial, and Woot) will expand and offer new features.
- Social feedback and people using recommendations from virtual “friends” in decision-making.

3. Mobile Computing and Phone Apps

Thanks to the growing popularity of smartphones and tablet computers, mobile computing will take off in the next few years. Android phones, the iPhone, and iPad have taken the market by storm and in turn grabbed the attention of business decision-makers. International Data Group (IDG), a technology media, events and research company, predicts that shipments of mobile devices will outnumber personal computer shipments during the next year and a half.

Phone apps have created a new way of using technology and changed the game for many businesses. IDG reports that the mobile app market will increase to 25 billion downloads in 2011 from 10 billion in 2010. Consumers will also be able to get their hands on mobile devices featuring significant enhancements and features. According to Gartner, some of the mobile technologies that will greatly evolve include GPS systems, mobile widgets, and platform-independent application development tools.