

Jeff Pulver IP Predictions for 2006

Jeff Pulver, chairman of pulvermedia and pulver.com, recently offered his IP Predictions for 2006, stating that “2005 was the year that IP Communications grew up, and 2006 will be the year when Wall Street and global financial markets take our industry to the next level. As the interest around the world in IP communications continues to grow, IP Communications is ‘disruptive’ communications in the most positive sense, and it will dramatically enhance the ways in which we communicate.”

- 1) Broadband penetration will continue to snowball in the US, but not at a pace fast enough to raise America's mediocre global standing in broadband penetration. We, however, begin to appreciate the benefits of Metcalf's Law, as broadband penetration snowballs and opens the door for an unprecedented surge in creativity and uptake of new Internet applications.
- 2) Lobbyists and Policymakers in the US will continue to try to apply legacy rules and regulations on Internet based applications, be it voice, television or radio.
- 3) In the US, the remaining “Baby Bells” will grow up and hold a virtual “family reunion” of sorts, which will, in effect, establish “Walled Gardens” in their collective broadband product offerings. Expect other incumbent operators around the world to join this implicit cartel. In parallel, Wireless Operators worldwide will continue to roll out their 3G strategies and grow their own Walled Gardens, leaving both academics and the Internet pioneers wondering “what ever happened to the dream of the Arpanet?”
- 4) The FCC will attempt to extend its definition of indecency laws to the Internet, Cable and Satellite networks.
- 5) In regards to entertainment media: (a) As filmmakers start to feel comfortable with the concept of going “direct to the Net,” 2006 will be the year when this starts to become the norm, rather than the exception. (b) Look for “Television” shows to premiere first on the Internet and then appear on Broadcast TV, Cable or Satellite. (c) Look for more TV shows to be become downloadable for viewing on personal communication devices.
- 6) VoIP peering will continue to happen between carriers, but the business models driving peering will not be worked out until 2007 or beyond. Look for Enterprises to explore the benefits of federating their communication networks.
- 7) There will be at least two major acquisitions in the billion-dollar-plus price range, matching or exceeding eBay's purchase price to acquire Skype. Major media and Internet companies will announce blended, transformational IP-based communications plays.

- 8) Hurricanes such as Katrina and other natural disasters in the U.S. and around the world will compel the U.S. and other governments to look to the Internet and IP-based communications as the vehicle to improve emergency response and post-catastrophe communications.
- 9) The Internet application providers, such as Google, yahoo!, eBay, and Amazon will increase their presence and influence in DC and on communications policy.
- 10) The sides in the communications policy wars will become more apparent, with Internet Access Providers on the one side and Internet Application Providers on the other.
- 11) Governments around the world will look harder at VoIP regulation, with an eye towards imposing social obligations such as emergency response, lawful intercept and disabilities access. We will see a deepening divide between those countries that nurture the emerging industry and technology and those that stifle innovation by imposition of unnecessary, overly-broad and economically-debilitating one-size-fits-all regulation.
- 12) Look for the support of “voice” to become part of the eCommerce strategy for many Websites.
- 13) Wireless will continue to replace wireline at a faster pace and may also continue to outpace the growth of consumer voice over broadband services sold to consumers.
- 14) ENUM continues to happen around the world and the US will still lag behind.
- 15) The RIM (Research in Motion) patent challenge will become a boon for integrated IP Communication enabled devices.

Pulver publishes a blog that offers insight into the state of the IP Communications industry. This blog, which is updated daily (and sometimes more often than that) addresses all-things-VoIP, from the technical (i.e., service and product innovations, extensions of concept) to the political (Governmental concerns, hearings and rulings, any and all issues-based subject matter).

The Jeff Pulver Blog can be accessed at <http://pulverblog.pulver.com/>, and reader comments are welcome.