



076. ARIZONA'S CRYSTAL BALL

We asked some well-connected, world-class individuals what the big trends next year will be in energy, health care, technology and security. Cheap HIV treatment? WiFi phones? Airborne particle detection? Bomb detection? Cheap fuel sources? Rampant RFIDs? Pinpoint surveillance? Faster testing and curing of diseases? Here's what they said.

BY RICK GIBSON

Marv Slepian, MD

Director of Intervention Cardiology
University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center:

"Certainly the area of energy independence is vital for a strong American future. Several years ago, alternative energy sources were looked upon as a non-profitable, way-down-the-road sector. It's clear we are now down the road. Another ripe area is personal detection and safety of biohazards, chemical hazards and conventional weapon hazards. Finally, biomedical technology remains vital, particularly for chronic diseases. With the shrinking health-care dollar, the ability to keep patients out of the hospital is attractive to patient, physician and payor."

Frank R. Kline

Managing Partner, Kline Hawkes & Co.:

"Clearly, SPAM and viruses are tops on the CEO's mind. Handhelds are evolving rapidly, and Verizon's new 600 product ties into your current server so you can get e-mails and voice mails without adding a \$25,000 server from Blackberry. Homeland security is all a-buzz; purchase orders are getting signed, but (most of) the cash is sucked up by police overtime so there's not enough left over to get spent on homeland security."

Erika Feinberg

Chairman, ActiveForever:

"Everything I own has been pouring into consumer-driven health. We're about to get hit by another rise in health-insurance premiums. ActiveForever is growing at a rate of 2,000% due to offering best choices of quality products at best prices for medical, physical rehabilitation and health-related convenience products."

William Mook

President, Mök Industries:

"The United States has sufficient sunlight and sufficient carbon reserves to make unlimited amounts of synthetic oil for the foreseeable future. The question always has been, at what cost? My company has completed a study using our proprietary solar-energy technology. Mök plans to cover more than 3,000 square miles of land located in northern Nevada with solar panels. With these panels we will produce high-voltage DC electricity. When combined with present oil production within the United States, we can be energy independent."

Sharon C. Ballard

Founding Management Fellow,
Coach and Instructor, ASU Technopolis:

"New solutions for fraud prevention and ID theft, particularly for e-commerce; alternative home energy products using waste as fuel to help reduce energy consumption, costs and dependence on foreign oil; efficient, affordable material and related manufacturing inventions to help semiconductor producers overcome the heat density 'brick wall'; and bioengineered technologies that deliver medicine more efficiently with fewer side effects."

Quinn P. Williams

Shareholder, Greenberg Traurig:

"Personal security products will be hot items, whether a home version of a Taser or home kits for detecting airborne pathogens. The aging boomer population will focus on security in all forms."

Marilyn Teplitz

President, MGT Associates:

"Biometrics is becoming practical for general implementation. With heightened security concerns and identity theft, people are more willing to use biometrics, such as fingerprint recognition, for transactions. Large hospital systems are beginning to implement biometrics for rapid and secure access to electronic patient records. Local vendor? Check out Ultra-Scan, an up-and-comer offering 'true identity biometrics.'"

David Beauchamp

Partner, Quarles & Brady, Streich Lang:

"An interesting product is nanotechnology as it relates to drug delivery and airborne particle detection. There's a lot of interest in computer programming making a big difference in drug testing as it relates to modeling and more efficient clinical testing systems."


"Biometrics is becoming practical for general implementation."

—Marilyn Teplitz, MGT Associates

Stephanie A. McRae

Attorney, Jennings, Strouss & Salmon:

"Eyetech is developing a treatment for age-related macular degeneration. They went public earlier this year and stayed well above the initial price. With such a successful IPO in the midst of drastic legislative changes and population shifts, investment dollars and product development efforts should continue to escalate."

Whether 2005 brings advancements in bioterrorism, biometrics or biomedicine, we're gonna be busy. Research in each field is destined to have a dramatic effect on the world we live in, and ultimately, the people you know will owe their lives to discoveries in one or more of these areas. 

Rick Gibson (rick@clearblueventures.com) is president of Tucson-based Clear Blue Ventures (clearblueventures.com), a new "venture-lending fund," and also is managing director of HOTventures LLC.