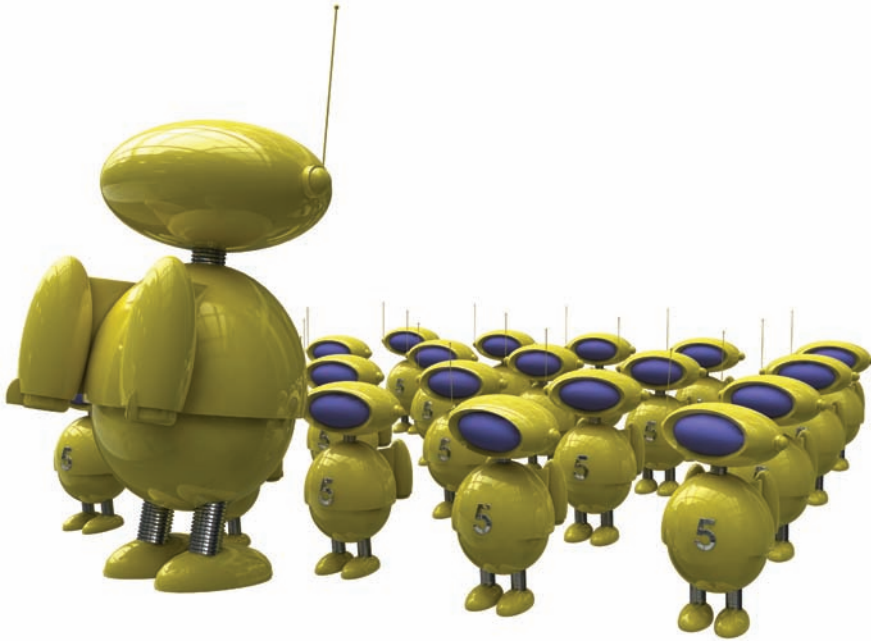


# 'Machine-to-machine'

the next technology catalyst?



It's easy to point to new applications that have revolutionised the technology sector through the solutions they have prompted. For example, the space race, which triggered fundamental advances in electronic miniaturisation. More recently, the mobile phone has accelerated this advance by stimulating technology manufacturers around the world to focus on a common goal – to drive down the cost of microprocessors, memory, displays and all of the other essential ingredients that enable the plethora of smart hand-held devices which consumers are devouring.

So, what could catalyse the next wave of growth? What markets could drive product volumes even beyond the billions of mobile phones that now exist? One such market is machine-to-machine communications. Ignoring fanciful visions of intelligent machines that take over the world, it's clear that a whole range of entirely credible industrial, commercial and consumer automation applications exist that would benefit from such connectivity and could vastly increase market volumes above those of the humble phone.

We're all familiar with the rise in low-cost microprocessors that are taking up residence in our home appliances. Today, we can add wireless communication to them for a dollar or two, enabling much richer functionality. For example, we can implement features such as energy management, triggering appliances such as our washing machines to run at times that allow energy companies to maximise their overall efficiency through the day, thus reducing their carbon footprint.

So, what are the obstructions to such a revolution? Clearly, machines will need to communicate with a common language, which will rely on the agreement and definition of relevant protocols. Most importantly, devices need to operate invisibly in the background, avoiding complicated set-up and maintenance – instead simply working with their 'colleagues'. However, once these obstacles are overcome, we believe this is a market with massive potential that also has serious environmental and commercial advantages if developed correctly.

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*by the way...*

*We want Interface to be a magazine full of thought-provoking ideas, rather than just another piece of corporate 'advertising'. However, hopefully we're also whetted your appetite and you're just a little curious about what we do. So let me tell you more...*

*In short, we help people to achieve great things with technology.*

*Yes, we offer technology consulting - as the company name in part suggests - but we also develop absolutely brilliant products for clients across a whole range of markets. And with half a century of experience, we have the knack of being able to do it in double-quick time.*

*Naturally, we employ some of the sharpest minds in the industry and you can only begin to imagine how pioneering these people are when you put them in one room with a problem to solve.*

*To find out more, why not have a look at our website? Or simply get in touch.*

*...the Editor*