

## CONVERGENCE TO DEFINE ICT TRENDS OF 2010

2 February 2010: Convergence will be one of the key trends that define the development of ICT technologies in 2010, as companies vie for an increasingly smaller piece of the consumer pie.

That is the view of Martin Butler, Information Systems Management lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB), who was speaking at a talk entitled '*New ICT technologies — a business perspective on their impact in 2010 and beyond*' held at the USB on Friday 29 January 2009, as part of the USB's series of Leaders Angle talks. A 15 minute video extract and PowerPoint presentation of Butler's talk is available on the USB website at [www.usb.ac.za](http://www.usb.ac.za).

"Increasingly we are seeing companies that once occupied very different spaces such as telecoms, entertainment and search engines beginning to encroach on each other's markets," says Butler.

He says companies such as Panasonic and LG are already launching televisions with Skype's Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) capability built in, while Google recently launched a smartphone and has also moved into Microsoft's Office space with Google Docs. Most recently, Apple moved into the eBook space with its iPad.

Butler cited a number of trends that he believes will shape the ICT industry over the next 12 months, including:

- Concepts that provide extreme convenience for consumers,
- Increased focus on security of IT systems
- Products that provide more bang for the same buck
- The emergence of Green IT

Butler says the concept of Green IT is one that will be playing a much bigger role over the next year and beyond. "Environmental awareness and developing greener technologies is something that is becoming an important focus for many businesses in the current climate."

He says that in the past many firms have preached, but not practiced the value of green issues, something that he expects to change as consumers and businesses are becoming more socially aware.

“In the future these companies will take Green IT much more seriously. In fact a recent study found that within three years most people will start looking at levels of energy consumption as part of their decision making process when buying a new laptop.”

Butler also says the emergence of new devices such as Apple’s iPhone and other mobile smartphones have changed the way people access the internet. He says a survey by Gartner has forecast that by 2013, mobile phones will overtake PCs as the most common web access device.

“Mobile applications are a radical new development that are changing the way we access, and the reasons for accessing, the internet. As a result, more businesses are redesigning their content and launching .mobi versions of their websites.”

Butler highlighted two recently homegrown concepts – Amba-Afrika and Afridoctor - that have been hailed as great moves forward within mobile applications.

Amba-Afrika is a multilingual application that can translate any of the official 11 languages in SA while Afridoctor is a mobile health clinic that provides instant access to vital medical information and enables people to send through their symptoms and receive advice back.

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**About University of Stellenbosch Business School:**

Since its inception in 1964, the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB) has become a renowned player in the international business school community. The student body, which grows each year, presently comprises over 650 MBA students, some 150 students of two further Master’s degrees, 26 PhD students and several thousand other students taking part in the wide range of shorter executive courses. The USB MBA offers a solid theoretical grounding for the practical, real-world application of management and leadership competencies in any business sector in South Africa, on the African continent as well as in the global business community. The USB is the only business school of a South African university with two international accreditations: EQUIS from the European Foundation for Management Development and AMBA from the Association of MBAs. Visit [www.usb.ac.za](http://www.usb.ac.za) for more information.