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The Microchip Invasion

Customers want to interface more with their technology products. That's the feedback from recent market research carried out on both business users and consumers. They want more interactivity, more real-time mobility and more standard process automation. However, the research also shows that they are not prepared to engage in steep learning curves to gain these advantages.

This new attitude has huge implications for technology manufacturers - both in terms of product development and in the creation of new opportunities. Future products will have to be intuitive and create a pleasing "environment" for the user to interface with. It will be a key distinguisher in any one product outselling another. And it will have to be incorporated at a reasonable price.

The only feasible way of delivering this type of functionality cost effectively is through the use of embedded software that can be printed, produced and upgraded cheaply at microchip level. This approach is set to explode and the requirement for available skills and resource will be hard fought as few companies can deliver this type of expertise. Andreas Pabinger of WindRiver remarks, "Today, only 2% of the world's microprocessors sit inside desktop computers and servers. The rest go into some three billion electronic devices – anything from MP3 players to pacemakers. The increasing complexity of the software required to guide these devices is giving birth to a multibillion dollar industry which will eventually dwarf the market for desktop software."

Technology manufacturers need to decide how they can best identify the desires of their future customers; otherwise they will not be creating the products people want to buy. The "make and sell" environment is evolving into a "listen and serve" revolution and those who interpret the need accurately will enjoy an increase in sales and loyalty. James Bridson, MD of LeoTel Software Systems comments, "We have seen a huge increase in the demand for our embedded software services over the last twelve months, and I see no let up for the next few years. People want technology products that make their lives easier and embedded software is the best way of delivering that experience."

Release ends

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