

UWB Window of Opportunity

Contributed by IMS Research
Thursday, 08 May 2008
Last Updated Monday, 14 July 2008

09 May 2008 – Ultra Wideband (UWB) has been here, there and everywhere. The reality is UWB is at a cross-road and 2008 is a make or break year for the technology.

After being relatively quiet for the last 6 months, the WiMedia Alliance are about to give another big push to get this technology out there. Without being too pessimistic, there's a feeling of "now or never". There's a window of opportunity for UWB, specifically WUSB and it's now. Companies need to act fast and WUSB must prove itself to manufacturers, to consumers, and to associations such as the Bluetooth SIG.

According to Fiona Thomson, Research Director for IMS's Connectivity Group, "In this fluid sector, there's always another technology waiting in the wings. There's always another option for OEMs." She added, "For high speed Bluetooth technology, they can use WLAN and 60GHz, with all its supporters, is not far off in technology roll-out terms."

Having said this, IMS Research does believe in UWB and the usage scenarios that the technology offers. Early WUSB-enabled notebook PC announcements from players such as Dell, Toshiba and Lenovo highlight the support UWB has. While these vendors continue to add WUSB to new skews, other vendors are looking to jump on board and integrate UWB as a way of differentiating their products. Some major notebook OEMs have stated that Bluetooth v3.0 will be a requirement going forward.

IMS Research views the notebook market as being integral to the success of the UWB market as a whole. During research for a recently published report entitled, "The World Market for UWB", some notebook OEMs expressed concern that the other half of the ecosystem has been disappointing to date, with fewer than expected UWB-enabled peripheral product announcements. However, UWB is an ideal technology for portable products such as digital cameras and PMPs and IMS Research believe it won't be long before UWB is integrated here.

At around \$10, current UWB IC prices are too high for the technology to be integrated into the majority of products. However, as prices drop to \$5 and below, IMS Research envisages that UWB market volume will really ramp up to over \$1 billion in the next 4 or 5 years.

If you would like an interview with an expert in this area, please contact Alison Bogle, Marketing Manager, at Alison.Bogle@imsresearch-usa.com or +1 412-441-1888.