

Frank Hanzlik

Managing Director
Wi-Fi Alliance

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BB2.0: Describe the central mission of the Wi-Fi Alliance.

Hanzlik: Our mission centers around growing the global market for 802.11-based wireless LAN technology. We do that through a very successful product certification program, the Wi-Fi CERTIFIED program. Since the program was put in place seven years ago, it has resulted in more than 3,000 products being certified.

BB2.0: What kind of progress has been made in making Wi-Fi the global wireless standard?

Hanzlik: We've made tremendous progress. Today, we have around 300 member companies from around the world participating in the organization. In the late 1990s, industry shipments of Wi-Fi-enabled products were

measured in the tens of thousands of units per year. This year we're on track to ship 200 million units or more.

BB2.0: In addition to promoting device interoperability, how does the Wi-Fi Alliance's work benefit businesses and consumers?

Hanzlik: Our key goal is to ensure that businesses and consumers have a great experience with the technology. That is the litmus test. We've been expanding on our core interoperability work to include new programs that address elements of usability—for example, making it easier to set up network security. We're also getting into RF performance measurement and testing, which is very important as we see Wi-Fi capability being integrated into phones.

BB2.0: A recent survey by the Alliance found that consumers are very interested in home network security. What steps are you taking to address their concerns?

Hanzlik: We've been beating the drum very hard to get the word out about the importance of enabling security on your network. One of the encouraging things we found was that 77 percent of the people surveyed that are using Wi-Fi have security enabled on their networks. If you looked at survey data from a few years ago, that number would have been closer to about 20 percent. In addition, the security itself has become very robust. The security we ship today that's mandatory for every product that's Wi-Fi CERTIFIED

includes the highest level of encryption commercially available. And finally, the industry has been working very hard on making security easy to set up. A few years ago, quite frankly, it wasn't that easy. Today, we have auto configuration wizards, and there's a variety of advances we'll be rolling out early next year to make it even easier.

BB2.0: Consumers are increasingly using a variety of devices to access the Internet and share content. What is the Wi-Fi Alliance doing to accommodate these new devices?

Hanzlik: We see Wi-Fi expanding into two major product segments: the handset segment and the consumer electronics segment, which includes gaming devices, cameras, MP3 players and media centers. Consumers today want to do more with their broadband connection than just surf the Internet, like making voice calls. That means providers need to offer voice support, which requires some kind of quality of service mechanism to ensure you can deliver that experience in a way that's robust and consistent with the experience customers get with other forms of voice communication. Demand is also growing for high-definition video, and the ability to move content around the home or office, which means there's a need for greater bandwidth and more robust quality of service. As a result, we are addressing higher speeds, greater coverage, and voice and video applications in our certification development roadmap.

BB2.0: What kind of impact is the market trend toward fixed-mobile convergence (FMC) having on the Wi-Fi Alliance?

Hanzlik: There's tremendous interest from major operators around the world in the application of FMC services. In anticipation of that demand, we've set up a strategic partnership with the Fixed Mobile Convergence Alliance, an organization of about 25 major operators from around the world that are all trying to drive this FMC vision. Together, we've been rolling out programs to make the combination of Wi-Fi and cellular more of a reality. For example, we've certified 35 phones already this year that have FMC capability, and we're doing a lot of work with groups like the CTIA to do joint testing of Wi-Fi enabled phones.

BB2.0: The Wi-Fi Alliance is pursuing a two-phase certification program for 802.11n that includes a draft standard

in 2007 and a final standard later in 2008. How will that process affect device manufacturers?

Hanzlik: It's important to understand that this decision was very member-driven. Some of the pre-standard products on the market were experiencing some interoperability issues, and the membership decided we need to step in and make sure people have a great experience with 802.11n. The two-phase certification program is designed to do that. The products that will be introduced during the first half of next year that support the standard will be focused mainly on the consumer and SOHO (small and home office) market segments. The large enterprises and government agencies tend to be a little more conservative, and they may wait for the final standard.

BB2.0: What are the biggest challenges the Alliance will face in the near future?

Hanzlik: Rolling out 802.11n is a huge initiative for the Alliance. It's going to take a lot of hard work, but I think everyone is very committed to getting it done. In addition, we have some very strategic initiatives in the area of voice over Wi-Fi, to ensure that this huge opportunity with handsets can be realized. And we just kicked off another initiative for video over Wi-Fi, which I think will be very key to the digital home experience. The good news is that there's a very strong economic incentive for our members to achieve these goals—everyone sees the growth potential in this market—and we have the right people in the ecosystem around the table to work it out. **26**

Frank Hanzlik is Managing Director of the Wi-Fi Alliance, the worldwide trade association for the Wi-Fi industry. With close to 20 years of experience in the wireless and communications industries, he is responsible for leading strategy, business development and operations for the organization, and for driving worldwide growth in the \$5 billion per year Wi-Fi industry.



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