

B.C. technology firms urged to 'walk with the elephants' of the industry

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2005 OUTLOOK | British Columbia tech companies have been advised that a good way to build their businesses and get their products used widely is to "walk with the elephants" — like Microsoft, Intel, IBM, Oracle, Cisco, HP, Texas Instruments and AMD.

Vancouver-based tech expert Geoffrey Hansen, a partner in Rocket Builders — which released its Ready to Rocket list of 25 hot B.C. tech companies on Wednesday — said that the major companies are on the lookout for technology that will integrate well with their own products.

"Companies such as IBM and Microsoft are now focusing a lot of

their energies on leveraging smaller companies," Hansen told a British Columbia Technical Industries Association session on the 2005 I.T. Outlook for the province. "Because as these companies become larger there are gaps of opportunity for smaller information technology product providers to target specific opportunities and fill gaps left by these larger players."

In B.C. the tech companies, said Hansen, are essentially the kinds of companies that have great technology that targets specific areas and can capitalize on it.

"The chance to draft behind the fast-moving large player is a great opportunity for the type of companies we have in the I.T. sector in B.C."

However, cautioned Hansen, B.C. tech companies have to be careful when they enter such partnerships. "You have to be careful that the elephant doesn't roll over in the middle of the night and run you over," said Hansen.

Hansen said top growth areas for 2005 — and places where B.C. companies should aim their technology — would be in health care, particularly life sciences, and in retail and in meeting the needs of government.

Consistent areas of growth, said Hansen, will be in financial services. And he said one of the top growth geographic areas would be in Asia, particularly India and China. Other countries offering opportunities, he said, are Brazil and Russia.

Earlier in the day Hansen delivered much the same message at the release of the 2005 Ready to Rocket list.

The companies that were picked to make significant moves this year were: Air Games Wireless; Antarctica Systems; Axonwave Software; Bycast; Caelo Software; Colligo Networks; Connectus Direct Solutions; Convedia; CopperLeaf Technologies; Eyeball Networks; FinancialCAD; Flowfinity Wireless; GaleForce Solutions; GenoLogics Life Science Software; How2Share Technologies; IronPoint Technology; Layer 7 Technologies; Loki Management Systems; MAKE Technologies; NewHeights Software; NGRain, PureEdge Solutions; ResponseTek Networks, RewardStream and TAP Solutions.