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Gartner Says Evolution from the PC to the Personal Cloud Will Drive Invisible, Sensor-Enabled Devices Driven by Applications and Services

Technology Will Be Integrated Into Invisible Items and Wearable Devices

STAMFORD, Conn., February 20, 2013 — Consumers' digital lives have transitioned from the PC to a personal cloud-driven world that is driving a new type of interaction between consumers and their connected services, according to Gartner, Inc. Consumers will use and interact with a multitude of connected, sensor-enabled devices driven by applications and services to create cognizant ecosystems independent of a platform or operating system.

"Cognizant computing evolves the connected device and personal cloud service into an activity of seamless and frictionless integration connected to sensor-driven 'invisible' devices that are optimised for a particular set of functions," said Michael Gartenberg, research director at Gartner. "This data and information can then be tied to other services across larger ecosystems, platforms and operating systems."

While cognizant computing is not a new concept, it is the natural evolution of a world driven not by devices but rather collections of applications and services that extend across multiple platforms and exist outside the realm of connected screens, such as phones, tablets, PCs or televisions.

As a result, applications are now 24/7 aware of action or inaction, need not be turned on or off and ultimately provide a greater amount of relevant information that can eventually drive behaviour change. This is something that is not possible in stand-alone applications or devices. Consumers also don't have to adopt or make a commitment to a platform or service in total and can adopt through long-term interaction and purchases that are driven by short-term task-driven functions.

"One of the defining experiences of cognizant computing is that the devices that drive the experience fall into what we refer to as the invisible space. We define this as the combination of devices and services that unite to form an experience that is below the daily threshold of awareness," said Jessica Ekholm, research director at Gartner. "In practice, consumers will forget the devices are being carried, worn or used until they need to interact with them for control or to obtain feedback in terms of data or information."

Invisible and cognizant devices that range from wristwatches, key fobs, thermostats and shoes are the digital equivalent of undeveloped property that can become extraordinarily valuable to the user when linked to the appropriate services to extend their use. Although the ideas behind today's cognizant devices have been around for more than a decade, wearable technology, such as smart watches have, for the most part, failed to gain any traction with the consumer due to high costs, little perceived value, an emphasis on technology over form and the need for them to exist as stand-alone products and services that did not and could not tie into a larger ecosystem or platform.

"Personal cloud services and ecosystems are now the centre of the digital consumer experience," said Mr Gartenberg. "Combined with increasingly ubiquitous connections, cognizant devices offer new opportunities to drive new device adoption, grow personal cloud services and act as a tipping point for consumer platform adoption. As new digital devices decrease in size, tie into existing applications such as home automation and personal fitness, and increase in perceived user functionality as well as overall form, we will see an increase of multiple devices throughout the home and person that will trend into the invisible space."

More detailed analysis is available in the report "Market Insight: Consumer Apps and Services Will Become More Aware and Less Visible." The report is available on Gartner's web site at <http://www.gartner.com/resId=2289815>.

Additional information on consumer technologies will be presented in the webinar "The Gartner Scenario for Consumer Technology Providers" taking place 26 February at 4:00pm UK time. To register for this complimentary webinar, please visit <http://my.gartner.com/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=202&mode=2&PageID=5553&ref=pr-update&resId=2300017&srcId=1-2994690285>.

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