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Honey, I Shrunk the Chip!

By Mike Banks Valentine

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Let's get small, real small, and then we can go anywhere! No, I'm not advocating we shrink ourselves, but rather discussing dramatic changes coming now that computers can be tiny and inexpensive. Recent movement in conservative, and previously very scarce venture capital investments (in two notable areas) suggests a brave new world of inexpensive, ubiquitous computing could be approaching.

What's ubiquitous computing and who cares about nanotech? These are the areas gaining that precious VC funding now. When I tried to discuss them with my wife she was NOT interested, so naturally I assumed that most folks would feel the same. But I'm fascinated, I gotta discuss this with someone! Hang on and let's go for a tiny ride.

Imagine a tube so small that it's 100,000 times smaller round than a human hair, so small that atoms must pass through them in single file! These tiny tubes are the new building blocks of miniature computing. I won't attempt a description here as I'm still a little foggy on the idea myself. Suffice it to say that smart folks are working on building extremely powerful computers that can also be cheap, efficient and everywhere using carbon nanotubes.

Current chips are called embedded microprocessors. They come in your watch, your TV remote, kitchen appliances and your garage door opener. It has been estimated that the average American home boasts 50 microprocessors. Your PC has about ten more! The mouse, the keyboard, speakers,

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USB interface, etc. each have additional microprocessors. If you are lucky enough to drive a new Mercedes, you have 65 microprocessors parked right there in your driveway!

About this time, my wife is muttering, "So What!?"

O.K., I did propose a short and tiny ride, so let's take a left turn now look at what it means if commercially viable (cheap) nanocomputers become available soon.

First and foremost, small and cheap mean computers'll be inside everything you buy. They'll put them everywhere

they're currently found, such as your cell phone and PDA. But where it gets really interesting is when it becomes cheap enough to embed the little critters in items that don't currently need computing power. Why? Because they can! If you want the low-down on these tiny 'puters, go to the following link for a microscopic trip through this miniature world.

http://www.extremetech.com/print_article/0,3428,a%253D21424,00.asp

Venture Capital investments are being made not only by VC groups who recognize the dramatic potential of tiny technology, but a VC firm called Ardesta has been formed to act as a nanotech "accelerator". <http://Ardesta.com> Ardesta has built a cheerleading squad around what they prefer to call "Small Tech", an industry growing smaller by focusing their microscope on MEMS, or microelectro-mechanical systems.

Why get small? Microsystems clearly cost less in raw materials, many of which are plastic. All cost less to power since they are lightweight and tiny. Some even have miniature power plants built right in their itty bitty machinery. Many of the same benefits accrue to carbon tube nanocomputers being tested now on a pinhead sized platform.

Now comes the fun part! What happens when tiny machines powered by tiny microprocessors are humming away in tiny corners of every appliance making them work better, faster, cheaper and more efficiently? Ubiquitous computing is here! There's even a conference on this infant technology that is

just over two years old and still in diapers, but growing fast as it approaches its third event in September 2002.

<http://www.viktoria.se/ubicomp2002/>

The idea here is not to make computers a noticeable part of our lives, but to make them disappear entirely while making everything easier. Is that clear—as-mud in a really tiny river?

Not only will all devices, furniture and even clothing be computing constantly, but they'll each be connected to each other and to the internet to make life easier for everyone. As with all utopian dreams, there is a dark side to this wondrous little liliputian world.

What about privacy?

With our underwear talking to global positioning satellites, it may be possible to have a really tiny big brother sewn into the elastic in your shorts. Wearable computers are available now with blood pressure monitors and tiny insulin-injecting pumps for those who need them. A microprocessor controlled artificial leg allowed Curtis Grimsley to escape the 70th floor of the World Trade Center on September 11.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/03/technology/circuits/03KNEE.html>

When all of these tiny computers can talk with each other and be connected to the web, it's time to take a serious look at who has access to which microprocessor and when.

I propose that we do that now, before privacy concern becomes a giant issue in a shrinking world.

Mike Valentine does Search Engine Placement for the SmallBusiness

The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie Experience

By Donna Monday

Just about everyone loves freshly baked chocolate chip cookies. Many of us have fond memories from our childhoods of the aroma of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies filling up the house. Our eager little eyes anxiously awaiting their arrival from oven to countertop.

Honey, I Shrunk the Chip!

Chocolate chip cookies are the ultimate comfort food. There's just something about them that makes us feel warm and fuzzy. The chocolate chip cookie has evolved over the years into a mouth-watering variety of textures and flavors.

If you're a fruit lover you'll enjoy banana chocolate chip cookies or cherry chocolate chip cookies. Chocolate lovers will delight over chocolate chocolate chip cookies, double chocolate chip cookies and white chocolate chip cookies.

Another popular variation is the oatmeal chocolate chip cookie. Who knew that oatmeal would taste so good with chocolate?

If you want to spice up your favorite chocolate chip cookies even more, you can add tasty morsels like mint chips, raisins, candy bars, espresso beans, m&ms, candy cane, walnuts, peanuts, macadamia nuts, dark chocolate or big chunks of milk chocolate.

Some folks love eating gourmet chocolate chip cookie bars and even chocolate chip cookie pie!

If you have special dietary needs, you can still enjoy home baked chocolate chip cookies. There are special recipes online for low fat chocolate chip cookies, vegan chocolate chip cookies, wheat free and egg free chocolate chip cookies, and whole wheat chocolate chip cookies.

Now that you know about the many ways you can enjoy the world's most famous cookie, I hope you will try many of the delicious recipes so you too can enjoy the ultimate chocolate chip cookie experience.

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Donna Monday is a contributing author at:

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The Ultimate Chocolate Chip Cookie Experience

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Cleopatra's Beauty Secrets

Best Recipes: Pineapple Delight Smoothie

131 Ice Cream Maker Recipes

The Big Book Of Cookie Recipes

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100 succulent Chinese Recipes

65 Tried and True Traditional Amish Recipes

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