Gartner's 2009 Hype Cycle Special Report Evaluates Maturity of 1,650 Technologies

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2009 Report is the Largest to Date With the Expansion of New Topics

STAMFORD, Conn., August 11, 2009 — Gartner, Inc. has examined the maturity of 1,650 technologies and trends in 79 technology, topic, and industry areas, and these findings have been published in "Gartner's Hype Cycle Special Report for 2009." Each Hype Cycle provides a snapshot of key technologies and trends in a specific technology, topic, geographic region, or industry domain.

This year's Hype Cycle report is Gartner's largest to date, as the coverage has expanded to include Hype Cycles on topics such as cloud computing, data centerpower and cooling technologies, media broadcasting, photovoltaic solar energy, and virtualization.

The "Hype Cycle for Emerging Technologies" is the longest-running annual Hype Cycle, providing a cross-industry perspective on the technologies and trends that IT managers should consider in developing emerging-technology portfolios (see Figure 1). This Hype Cycle features technologies that are the focus of attention in the IT industry because of particularly high levels of hype, or those that may not be broadly acknowledged but which Gartner believes have the potential for significant impact.

"Technologies at the Peak of Inflated Expectations during 2009 include cloud computing, e-books (such as from Amazon and Sony) and Internet TV (for example, Hulu), while social software and microblogging sites (such as Twitter) have tipped over the peak and will soon experience disillusionment among enterprise users," said Jackie Fenn, vice president and Gartner Fellow, and co-author of the book "Mastering the Hype Cycle" (published by Harvard Business Press).

"Looking at real benefit, rather than the hyped expectations, we see a number of potentially transformational technologies that will hit the mainstream in less than five years, including Web 2.0, cloud computing, Internet TV, virtual worlds and service-oriented architecture (SOA)," Ms. Fenn said. "Longer term, beyond the five-year horizon, RFID, 3-D printing, context-delivery architectures, mobile robots, and human augmentation will be transformational across a range of industries."

Additional analysis on some of the technologies and trends at the Peak of Inflated Expectations that will reach the plateau in two to five years are included below:

Cloud Computing. As enterprises seek to consume their IT services in the most cost-effective way, interest is growing in drawing a broad range of services (for example, computational power, storage and business applications) from the "cloud," rather than from on-premises equipment. The levels of hype around cloud computing in the IT industry are deafening, with every vendor expounding its cloud strategy and variations, such as private cloud computing and hybrid approaches, compounding the hype.

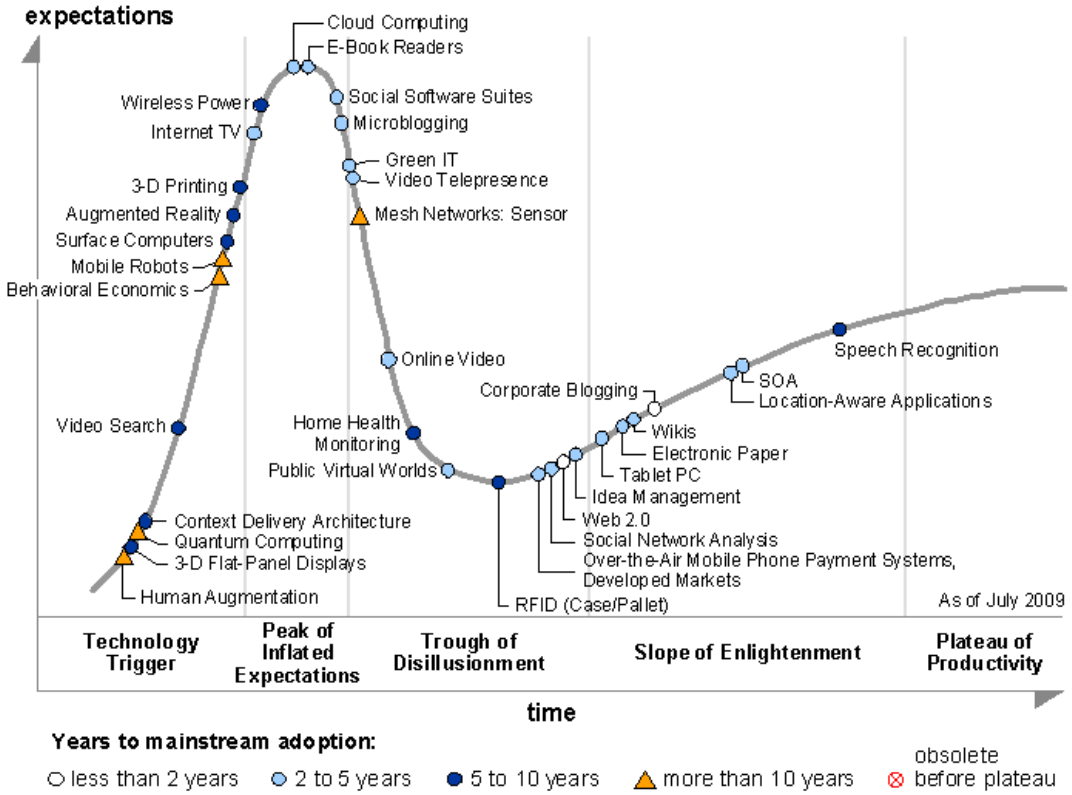
E-Book Readers. Sony's e-book reader and Amazon's Kindle have attracted a great deal of attention during 2009. However, the devices still suffer from proprietary file formats and digital rights management technologies, which along with price, are limiting their adoption and will drive them into the Trough of Disillusionment.

The following have tipped just past the Peak of Inflated Expectations:

Social Software Suites. Awareness of social technology is high because of the popularity of related consumer social software and Web 2.0 services. Within businesses, there is strong and rapidly growing evidence of experimentation and early production deployments. The movement from point tools to integrated suites has brought broader adoption but also high expectations. Disillusionment is beginning based on the realization that, even with a suite, much work must be done to build an effective social software deployment.

Microblogging. Microblogging, in general, and Twitter, in particular, have exploded in popularity during 2009 to the extent that the inevitable disillusionment around "channel pollution" is beginning. As microblogging becomes a standard feature in enterprise social software platforms, it is earning its place alongside other channels (for example, e-mail, blogging and wikis), enabling new kinds of fast, witty, easy-to-assimilate exchanges.

Figure 1
Hype Cycle of Emerging Technologies, 2009



Source: Gartner (August 2009)

"The Hype Cycle reports are a convenient way to look at a set of relevant technologies and trends," said Mark Raskino, vice president and Gartner Fellow, and co-author of the book "Mastering the Hype Cycle" (published by Harvard Business Press). "Many Gartner clients draw from multiple Hype Cycles, augmented with industry- or company-specific topics to create their own Hype Cycles and Priority Matrices as part of their annual technology planning."

Gartner introduced the idea of the Hype Cycle in 1995 as a commentary on the common pattern of human response to technology. Since then, the use of Hype Cycles has expanded both within Gartner and by its clients, as a graphical way to track multiple technologies within an IT domain or technology portfolio. Gartner's Hype Cycle characterizes the typical progression of an emerging technology, from overenthusiasm through a period of disillusionment to an eventual understanding of the technology's relevance and role in a market or domain. Each phase is characterized by distinct indicators of market, investment and adoption activities (see our research methodology).

Additional information is available in "Gartner's Hype Cycle Special Report for 2009." The document links to the 79 Hype Cycles reports. The report is available on Gartner' Web site at http://www.gartner.com/DisplayDocument?ref=g_search&id=1108412&subref=simplesearch.