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Gartner Highlights 2013 Cool Vendors That Are Transforming How Businesses Operate and Consumers Engage With Technology

Gartner to Discuss How Cool Vendors Will Challenge Current IT Assumptions in 17 July Webinar

STAMFORD, Conn., 15 May, 2013 — The converging and mutually reinforcing social, cultural and technological factors in the Nexus of Forces (cloud, mobility, social and information) are driving a radical power shift away from the culture of the organisation and toward that of the consumer. "Cool Vendors" are exploiting this nexus to challenge long-held assumptions and affect IT investment, according to Gartner, Inc. Gartner's 2013 Cool Vendors research series identifies the innovative companies, products and services that will shape business and consumer strategies in the future.

This year Gartner has profiled more than 400 Cool Vendors, in 86 reports, which have the potential to alter competitive dynamics in the automotive, consumer goods, energy and utilities, healthcare, life sciences, media and retail industries. These Cool Vendors offer innovative products and services relating to data, cloud services brokerage, people-centred computing, software infrastructures, security, risk management, applications, consulting, outsourcing, green IT and telecom operations management, as well as other markets.

By definition, Cool Vendors are small vendors that offer innovative products or services. The innovation may be in how the product works or in what can be accomplished by those using the product or service. A list of this year's Cool Vendors is available at <http://www.gartner.com/technology/research/cool-vendors/>.

"Many of these providers are exploiting the Nexus of Forces and are signposts of the creation of a new world order in the IT and technology markets. The phrase, "new world order" carries with it promise, threat, risk and opportunity," said Daryl Plummer, managing vice president and Gartner Fellow. "However, more than anything else, it includes a call to change the assumptions that underlie the ways we make our technology choices."

"It also calls for a change in the expectations we have for how technology will be used. To that end, we are highlighting vendors whose products or services incite changes in our assumptions," said Michele Cantara, research vice president at Gartner.

Retail, for example, represents a good place to cultivate change because customers' expectations of how they will engage with retailers has changed from in-store to online, and businesses are now returning to techniques designed to bring customers back to the store. The word "engagement" will become a key differentiator for businesses in 2013, as they look to improve their engagement models and the ways they engage customers, employees and partners.

"Customer/consumer engagement can include interaction with technology that is wildly outside the norm of how organisations tend to use technology, but it opens the door to "serendipity," which will result in innovation," said Mr Plummer. "Serendipity is the occurrence of good outcomes from chance. Never before, in the IT industry, has the opportunity for innovations to arise from seemingly unrelated sets of actions been so great. Through this serendipity, new models of engagement are being uncovered."

Although the research is extensive, it does not include all Cool Vendors as not every company that is making waves can be included. Therefore, analysts have chosen a selection of companies based on Gartner's sense of how impactful these vendors can be today and in the near future.

Additional information is available in the Special Report "Cool Vendors 2013: Exploiting the Forces That Empower the Individual and Erode IT Control," which is available on Gartner's web site at <http://www.gartner.com/technology/research/cool-vendors/>. The Special Report includes links to 86 reports, as well as video commentary.

Mr Plummer will provide additional analysis in the Gartner webinar "Cool Vendors 2013: The Nexus Grows and Challenges Current IT Assumptions." The webinar will take place July 17 at 1:00pm and 5:00pm BST. To register for this webinar, please visit <http://my.gartner.com/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=260&mode=2&PageID=3460702&showOriginalFeature=y&resId=2477715>.

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