

IQ 2008 Awards

It has been said that we live in the Age of Information. If you live in Utah, however, it could easily be called the Age of Innovation.

The following 30 companies illustrate that fact. Some have found ways to make your life a bit easier, while others may eventually cure the world's most devastating diseases. Regardless of the motive, the products and processes featured here are truly unbelievable. Join us in honoring the best that Utah's brightest minds have developed as we honor 30 companies and their groundbreaking innovations.

Call it brilliance. Call it intelligence. Call it genius. Whatever you call it, the light has definitely turned on for these companies.

By Jamie Huish Stum & Jacob Moon
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Denotes Category
Award Recipient





Skullcandy

With a name like Skullcandy, you've got to wonder what is going on in their minds. Evidently a lot. The Park City-based manufacturer of consumer electronics has recognized the need for portable media devices and accessories, especially among extreme sports junkies.

The most recent addition to the line-up was unveiled this year at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, and accentuates the company's foray into wireless technology. The newest gadget boasts an entire media player tucked right inside the headphones, freeing up the user from wires that typically must be hidden beneath shirts or jackets. Music can be transferred from iTunes or any media library to a portable SD memory card, which then slips into the bottom of the headphones. The music is controlled using buttons on the outside of the headphones. Skullcandy CEO Rick Alden says the device is the first of many wireless products, which will cater to the target market of teens and adults who typically use the company's high-end gear while snowboarding, skateboarding or doing just about any other sport.

Fincity

Remember the days of envelope budgeting, where cash is placed in specified envelopes for rent, food, insurance, etc.? Maybe that day was even yesterday.

Recognizing the benefit to such a simple model, Draper-based Fincity has created Mvelopes, an online budgeting application based on the traditional money management method.

As simple as the old-school method, Mvelopes makes the process even easier by electronically connecting a user's various savings and spending accounts from different financial institutions and managing them in one online location. Virtual envelopes are established by each user and can be modified as needed, but the basic budgeting tool remains the same, helping customers save and manage their money without ever cashing a check.

Fincity execs boast that the program has helped thousands of people save money by separating and allocating funds before they are spent. The program has also brought financial rewards to the company, driving quadruple-digit revenue growth for the company since its launch in 2002.

Paramed Systems

As a former paramedic, Nate Walkingshaw understands the difficulty of moving incapacitated patients. That's why he invented MÖV, a device used for transporting non-ambulatory patients up and down stairs. MÖV (pronounced "move") stands for Mobility Offers Versatility and is meant to provide a means for paramedics, nurses and others to transport patients who weigh up to 500 lbs. in their homes.

Outfitted treads much like a tank, the device provides mobility and ease in situations that used to be difficult, and in some cases dangerous, for medical personnel. MOV has been shown to be useful for home health workers who assist obese patients as well as paramedics in emergency situations and patients recovering from hip or knee surgery. Since its announcement last fall, MOV has become a hit in medical circles, earning a Top Pick Award at the 2007 MedTrade and EMS Expo. Paramed has pre-sold hundreds of units and will ship thousands in 2008.

Fatpipe Networks

Business in America relies heavily on the ability to be connected. Can you imagine what would happen if you lost all connections to your clients, satellite offices or network? That is the exact scenario that Fatpipe Networks is working to avoid. The fact of the matter is business can't be done nowadays without an Internet connection and Fatpipe is 99.999988 percent certain they will keep that connection no matter what. That figure is the exact redundancy CEO Ragula Bhaskar says his company can provide to corporate Wide Area Networks.

IPVPN uses patented technology that bonds any combination of data connections (T1, wireless, DS3, cable, DSL) from separate ISPs without the need of the ISP cooperation. It dynamically senses when services are unavailable and automatically reroutes packets to available lines. Through this method, IPVPN provides the network redundancy that has become critical to businesses that are tracking critical information.

ClearOne

ClearOne Communications has been in the audio conferencing business for more than 26 years. Typical installations include everything from speakerphones in executive offices to complete audio and video conferencing tools in high-end board rooms. But the company's new product line, the Chat 50 and the Chat 150, takes its advanced audio technologies to a much more personal level.

Winner of the 2006 PC Magazine Editor's Choice Award, the Chat 50 is meant to provide clear, uninterrupted communication from any PC or cell phone. For folks who are constantly on the road, the Chat 50 comes in handy as a personal speakerphone that can be used with Skype or other VoIP services and an effective way of communicating with the office or home or as a portable speaker system for a laptop. Both products incorporate ClearOne's full-duplex technology that allows seamless communication on both ends, meaning conversations can happen as if they were in person, without dead air time or interruptions that often occur with traditional speaker phones.

Mstar

Most homes are linked to the Internet with a DSL, cable or wireless connection. Typically the speed of the connection ranges from 256 Kbps to 7 Mbps, which can usually only be achieved in certain circumstances. Imagine, then, a connection at home that reaches 50 Mbps, 10 to 20 times faster than most standard home connections. With Mstar's latest offering, it is now a reality.

Last fall, Mstar announced its 50 Mbps Internet connection to homes on the UTOPIA network. The speed is, in fact, the fastest offered in the United States. The network's standard 15 Mbps connection was already worth bragging about, but the new speed takes it to a whole new level. The speed of a download or upload still depends on the provider at the other end of the Net, but the ability to download large files, such as a movie, in a matter of seconds has its merits.