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New chip may change how data exchanged

The Cell Processor has high-tech companies envisioning an information revolution.

MICHAEL MIKLOFSKY

The Associated Press

By MICHAEL MIKLOFSKY

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Special to the Citizen

Tucson high-tech companies are trying to figure out how the Cell Processor **chip** could be used to stimulate their business.

Tucson is the second city to be introduced to the **chip**. Jim Kahle, an IBM Fellow and director of technology for the **chip** spoke at Pima Community College's downtown campus Wednesday about how his work could revolutionize the way the world exchanges data.

Kahle said the excitement of the **chip** comes from its increased storage capacity and that the **chip** could be used in a variety of systems, including televisions, DVD players, computers and home gaming systems.

It was developed by a partnership among Sony, Toshiba and IBM.

Those who attended the talk speculated the **chip** could open up a Pandora's box of **new** uses and allow for the creation of **new** applications that could instantaneously interact with people.

"We can all start to see how things like that on desktops could substantially increase the kind of modeling that's done at the university in physical simulations and simulating **new** kinds of circuit boards such as bio modeling where people are studying protein folding," said Steve O'Neil, who handles special projects and outreach for the University of Arizona Office of Technology Transfer.

"You just push tools like that to the limit and having that kind of leaping power opens up **new** kinds of research areas and lets you think about problems that you used to think were out of bounds because of unavailability of computing power," he said.

Bob Breault, Arizona Optics Industry Association co-chairman, said cars could use the **chip** to allow real-time communication between vehicles in a given area.

The **chip**, he said, could allow cars to interact to determine which roads are heavy with traffic and an on-board navigation system could alert the driver to roads with less traffic.

Dr. John Hughes, Arizona Nanotechnology Cluster co-chairman, saw ways that his cluster could work with the optics association by combining data to create more advanced applications.

"Moving forward toward real time, for instance if you had a fingerprint, but also by nanotechnology you can have the DNA of the cells that were on that fingerprint even 10 and 100 years ago, that information can be correlated," he said. "Now to have that right in the hands of a policeman on a hand-held type thing, rather than having to have it go back to a central computer at a major center - that points things right at the decision-making point."

Randy Kahle, a principal with the Tucson-based technology and business consulting firm Variantia, and brother of Jim Kahle, helped organize his brother's talk. He said the ability of the **chip** to enhance data processing speed is what makes it unique.

The **chip** could allow for gaming systems and HDTV to be enhanced, and security systems could also be improved.

Face recognition could be improved to more quickly scan thousands of people at a time entering an airport, stadium or other public place. Navigation systems could read multiple maps at a time, synthesize the data and make recommendations, Randy Kahle said.

"Kitt Peak is producing images; they don't have the computing power to process them. They already need this level of computing power as they are contemplating **new** telescope systems that are going to generate, in order of magnitude, more data."

As the technology becomes available, IBM's Tucson operation, as a data storage facility, would face an increase in demand for storage space.



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