

## Industry vets: Content, filters and modes key to successful wireless data future

By Matt Kapko

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LAGUNA BEACH, Calif.—Posh met hype and circumstance all at once at the inaugural WebbyConnect Summit here last week.

While most of the buzz in the wireless and broadband industries tends to come from start-up companies shooting for the sky or pushing the envelope just for the sake of testing limits, attendees got an earful from a couple veterans who are just as excited about the opportunities, but equally concerned with where things are heading.

Michael Eisner, the former head of Walt Disney Co., gave a keynote speech that delved deep into the mindset of those pursuing new opportunities in the mobile and online space, urging pioneers in both spaces to not neglect the importance of filters.

“Change is an interesting thing, it can either be endlessly slow ... or it can be catastrophically quick,” Eisner said. “People are really, really reluctant to it, to accept change. I, on the other hand, have decided that change is fun.”

But with change comes many of the same rules that have always applied, he argued. Responsibilities in new media are nothing new, he said. While new technologies have empowered millions to be their own producers, directors, distributors and more in the matter of a few short years, much of the new content available to consumers is simply poor, he said.

“I do think culture and humor and taste and filtering is important,” Eisner said. “The new world ... still has old world responsibilities.”

Many people say they will never read a newspaper, but most of those same people will believe everything they read, Eisner said.

“The biggest problem that I see with the Internet is this user-generated stuff that I’m seeing ... is unfiltered anarchy,” he said. “Like any democracy, an unfiltered democracy can turn into anarchy.”

The Tornante Co., which Eisner founded in 2005, has formed Vuguru, an independent studio charged with producing and distributing original content for mediums most apt to play well with short-form video, namely wireless and broadband. He believes strongly that professionally produced content will rise to the top in mobile and online platforms.

Earlier in the day, Frank Nuovo, creative director of Nokia Corp.

subsidiary Vertu, drew similar conclusions, particularly when it comes to consumer's experience with wireless devices.

"One thing I find in this youth culture is this need for formality going on," Nuovo said. Wireless devices should have a varied set of modes that match our personal lives, he said. Whether people are in party mode, parent mode, business mode or leave-me-alone mode, their wireless device should be able to meet that need, he said.

"The reality is that we have to carry devices," he said. "We want to fee right, behave right, we want them to be robust and we want them to work in various aspects of our life."

Biz Stone, co-founder of social networking company Twitter, seems to be a big believer in modes or what Twitter calls "status." In Twitter's world, everything has a status whether it's the user's location, activity, plans or mood. Twitter harnesses the ubiquity of SMS and enables users to send messages from PCs or mobile devices as they keep tabs on their friends and other Twitter members.

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