

# Fledgling firms draw attention with their achievements, potential

Newcomers perfect their products, from fibre optics to travel to computer aids

-  Article
-  Comments 
- 

**TERRENCE BELFORD**  
FROM THURSDAY'S GLOBE AND MAIL  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2008 AT 6:28 AM EDT

Enablence Technologies Inc. is a publicly traded company that makes optical devices for fibre networks around the world. PlanetEye Inc. launched a website early this summer that helps travellers get the most out of a trip away from home. Storage Appliances Corp. makes and markets a device the size of a pack of cigarettes that automatically backs up and organizes all the files on your hard drive.

They are three seemingly very different companies, but to Deloitte & Touche, the international consulting company, they are sisters under the skin. They are three of the 10 that have made the "companies to watch" list in Deloitte's 11th annual Technology Fast 50, a ranking of Canada's fastest growing high-tech companies.

"We see them as the farm team for future inclusion in the Fast 50 rankings," says Duncan Stewart, Deloitte's research director for technology, media and telecommunications.

As John Ruffolo, leader of Deloitte's technology, media and telecom practice, explains, companies to watch have not yet been around for the five years necessary for consideration for the Fast 50 list, but have caught the judges' eye for a number of reasons.

"It might be the pace of sales growth or it might be that they are in a sector, or have technology, which we think offers enormous potential," he says. "We look at them as a venture capital company would, taking into account the skills of management, the potential for future global growth and what they have accomplished to date."

Storage Appliance, for example, seems to fit the bill on all counts. The Richmond Hill, Ont., company has carved out a niche for itself in a market others have overlooked. Its line of Clickfree storage devices have made backing up and organizing data as simple as plug-and-play, says Bryan McLeod, the company's chief executive officer.

"We created the company in 2005 and now have 50 people on staff, with 25 of them software developers in Beijing," he says. "We are selling both the hardware Clickfree and DVD versions all across North America in stores like Best Buy, Walgreen's and Staples, plus on the QVC shopping channel."

The secret lies in the software, Mr. McLeod explains. Storage Appliance devices allow users to simply plug into a USB port and Clickfree does the rest. It scans all files, saves everything and then organizes it into simple directories such as pictures, videos or word files. If a computer crashes the data is not lost; just plug in Clickfree and hit restore.

"We launched the first product at the beginning of this year," Mr. McLeod says. "At the end of the first quarter we had sales of \$1-million. By the end of the second quarter sales were \$10-million. That is how fast we are growing."

PlanetEye, by comparison, is still very much a work in progress. It is trying to create a website that will become a must for business travellers and consumers planning a trip anywhere, any time. The Toronto firm has combined mapping technology from Microsoft, one of its sponsors, with a search engine able to collect anything ever carried on the Net related to travel.

Click on a destination, then choose from a menu that might include anything from the best value in hotels to where to buy sugar-free cookies and the site can deliver the details including the precise location. Membership is free, says J.R. (Butch) Langlois, company president, and 10,000 people have signed up since the June launch to create their own PlanetEye page.

The revenue stream will come from fees paid for referrals from the site to online booking agencies such as Travelocity and Open Table and from paid advertising. Referrals are already up and running; advertising sales are just now being launched.

Enablence Technologies, based in Kanata, Ont., is at the other end of the spectrum. Chairman Arvind Chhatbar founded the company four years ago to capitalize on what he saw as a huge demand for optical devices that would allow telecom carriers to cheaply replace what is known as "the last mile" on fibre networks.

The last mile is the copper wiring that connects business and consumers with those fibre networks, and has proved to be a chokepoint for the speedy transfer of data; copper simply can't handle the speed computers need today.

"The best Bell can offer with copper is a maximum of 5 megabits a second and more normally just 2 megabits," Mr. Chhatbar says. "Using our devices can virtually guarantee 100-megabit speeds at a

fraction of the cost."

Enableness now has 205 employees in Kanata and offices in three U.S. cities and Zurich. Sales have grown from \$300,000 in the year ended April 30, 2007, to \$4-million this past year and are expected to hit \$30-million by the end of next April, Mr. Chhatbar predicts. "The market is huge," he says. "Not just in North America but in Japan, Taiwan and Korea. And as data files get bigger and the number of computers grow, that market will increase exponentially."

#### Ten companies to watch

Tech companies that have been in business for less than five years but show great promise.

COMPANY	LOCATION	SECTOR	PRODUCT/SERVICE
Blueprint Software Systems Inc.	Toronto	Software	Business analyst's workbench
Embotics Corp.	Ottawa	Software	Virtualization management and control
Enableness Technologies Inc.	Ottawa	Telecom	Optical components
Geminare Inc.	Toronto	Software	SaaS business continuity for small, medium business
In Motion Technology Inc.	New Westminster, B.C.	Telecom	Mobile communications networks
OmniGlobe Networks Inc.	Pointe-Claire, Que.	Telecom	Satellite and wireless solutions
Paymentus Corp.	Richmond Hill, Ont.	Software	Real-time bill payment network
PlanetEye Inc.	Toronto	Software	Travel planning website
Sidense Corp.	Ottawa	Hardware	Non-volatile memory
Storage Appliance Corp.	Richmond Hill, Ont.	Hardware	Data backup

DOUGLAS COULL/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SOURCE: DELOITTE & TOUCHE LLP

-  Article
-  Comments 
- 

Recommend this article? 0 votes

View the most recommended

#### SPONSORED LINKS

##### [Recruiting in the Finance Industry?](#)

Software for Recruiting, Applicant Tracking, Onboard Management,...

[Free Online Demo](#)

##### [Applicant Tracking System](#)

Complete Talent Platform, including Applicant Tracking and more, bac...

[Free Online Demo](#)

## The Breakthrough



When Radian6 scored its first big contract

## Autos



An electric buzz as GM recharges for the future

## Real Estate



Living small the next big thing?

## Globe Campus



The homecoming no one wants

## Contest



Win a work wardrobe makeover

© Copyright 2008 CTVglobemedia Publishing Inc. All Rights Reserved.

CTVglobemedia

globeandmail.com and The Globe and Mail are divisions of CTVglobemedia Publishing Inc., 444 Front St. W., Toronto, ON Canada M5V 2S9  
Phillip Crawley, Publisher