

Five questions: John Major

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John Major is president of San Diego-based Apacheta, a mobile wireless software company whose products are used to manage retail inventory and deliveries. He is the former chairman and chief executive officer of Novatel Wireless. Before that, he was the CEO of Wireless Knowledge, a joint venture of Qualcomm and Microsoft, and president of Qualcomm's Wireless Infrastructure Division.

What is Apacheta?

Apacheta is a new operating system that allows complex applications to run on wireless devices. One of the first examples of a complex application running on a wireless device is the wireless application that Motorola developed for UPS. It allowed them to know when a package was picked up and when it was dropped off. It revolutionized shipping. In retail, in-store deliveries are very complex. All of the information is on paper, and it can be a nightmare to figure out. Our system makes it easy to write software for wireless devices to track and manage retail inventories.



Where did the name come from?

The Apacheta is the original tributary of the Amazon River. It is the source of things important. There is another definition. The people who lived along the Amazon, the Incas, used to leave stones at certain points along the trails. Each time they passed, they would leave another stone. Some of the piles became quite large. They symbolized a gathering point. But we chose the name for the first meaning, the source of things to come.

Will wearable computers ever become commonplace?

When we talk about wearable computers (on our Web site), we are talking about carrying wireless-access devices wherever you go. I don't think it will be long before all knowledge workers will expect a rich, high-bandwidth, connected environment wherever they go.

Who are your target customers?

Anyone who delivers food. In the old days, deliveries were made in the morning of each day. Today, stores say to suppliers, "Keep our shelves stocked." Deliveries are scheduled as needed.

Are there consumer applications for your products?

I think they'll remain in the background. Consumers will see the right products on the shelves when they get to the store. But they won't see our software.

—JONATHAN SIDENER

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