



World tradewinds

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One Dollar

California's CyberCoast high-tech community reaches out to SMEs in Venice, Italy....Silicon Lagoon? *by Christina Polesel*

The Monterey Bay International Trade Association (M B I T A) <http://www.mbita.org> in Santa Cruz, California, and the Monterey Bay Export Assistance Center (EAC) of the USDOC in Monterey, California, have recently established an alliance with counterpart organizations in the Italian Veneto Region (Seven provinces in and around Venice, Italy).

MBITA UPDATE

Did you know that in 1998 the Italian market for Internet services was estimated at \$230 million? It is forecast to reach \$850 in the year 2000.

The complexity of technologies and the need for specialized skills is leading Italian companies to resort to external consulting in order to plan, design and implement their Internet related services. Excellent opportunities are anticipated for companies offering specialized services, such as Internet/Intranet/Extranet integrated systems.

MBITA Transatlantic videoconference on May 30th will open the doors for CyberCoast/Silicon Valley companies with B2B technologies to Italy and the rest of Europe. For details please contact the MBITA office.

**Robert "Tony" Livoti
Executive Director**

The alliance is meant to introduce B2B technology, bio-technology and other products and services to over 400,000 SMEs in the Veneto region of Italy. The Export Center of the Veneto Chambers of Commerce and a number of Italian public and private organizations located in the Veneto Region will participate in this alliance project on the Italian side. The project tabbed "Silicon Lagoon" will officially start with a videoconference that will originate from Hartnell College in Salinas, California and videocast to Venice, Italy on May 30th at 8:30 am.

The idea of this partnership developed under the direction of MBITA and the Monterey EAC with the belief that the respective economies on both sides will benefit and grow by making their resources available to their respective SMEs.

The Italian market relies almost entirely on imports of internetworking products. U.S. technological superiority in the internetworking sector is widely recognized, and the U.S. is expected to dominate the import market in the next few years. In the internetworking services sector, the liberalization of data and telecommunications services in Italy is offering excellent opportunities for new-to-market foreign operators. Italy is the world's fifth largest industrialized economy and Europe's fourth largest market for the information and communications technology industry. Although several structural problems still hinder the full evolution of the Italian IT market, its growth is accelerating following the pattern of other countries in Europe. Investments in the IT market



have also rebounded vigorously in the last three years, stimulated by renewed business and consumer confidence.

The increasing convergence between information technology and telecommunications and the availability of new technologies have underpinned the great potential of the Italian Internet-working market. Larger Italian companies and organizations are developing major internetworking projects to link their geographically dispersed Local Area Networks (LANs) and Wide Area Networks (WANs). The evolution of new organizational business models

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has created the need for upgrading intranets, extranets and internets, optimizing group work activities, integrating heterogeneous and distributed environments. The availability of new technologies and of high speed networks, as well as the increasing importance of the Internet, have had a tremendous impact on the demand for internetworking products and services in Italy.

The Veneto region is responsible for 14% of the nation's exports with an active balance amounting to about one third of the Italian trade surplus. In the last fifteen years, Veneto region companies have progressively increased their relations with other countries while adapting their organizations to comply with the new demand for internationalization.

The manufacturing sector in the Veneto region is composed of a variety of goods and a prevalence of small to mid-sized enterprises (SMEs). In the past, the Veneto region has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for adaptation to the market changes. Currently, the adoption of the enforced laws and of the new technologies turns out to be a strategic choice for successful SMEs to keep up to speed in the global marketplace. The Veneto region is making an effort to expand its network and plug into new resources. New high-tech resources are critical for the development of innovative services and the growth of the Veneto region economy.

"Thanks to the powerful driving force of the SME industries, the Veneto economy has been converted from one which transformed imported raw materials and semi-processed parts into a strong exporter. This process has developed into a form of specialization focusing essentially on the production and exports of finished products", says Giorgio Mattiello, with Vegapark, the Venetian gateway for Science and Technology.

"Quality is the feature that now distinguishes the goods produced in Veneto, a quality that consists above all in the capacity for ongoing product innovation and improvement, along with suitable services for ensuring the necessary technological, commercial and financial support," Mattiello continues. "We would like to think about our alliance with the CyberCoast of California as a gateway to develop the concept of 'Silicon Lagoon' in the Italian Veneto region," Mattiello concludes.

Venice-based VENETO INNOVAZIONE

(<http://www.venetinnova.it>) has been selected as the organization that will represent companies on the Italian

side of this videoconference between MBITA and the Monterey EAC clients and members. Veneto Innovazione is the leading center for the development of applied research and technological innovation and for exchanging information and launching new plans. Veneto Innovazione collects and coordinates scientific, organizational and existing financial resources in the Veneto re-



gion and supports SMEs in development and innovation by putting these resources at their disposal.

"This videoconference is a great beginning to connect CyberCoast SMEs that have proprietary technology and intellectual property with strategic partners in the Veneto region that wish to 'leap-frog' their B2B operations into a 21st-century model of company management technology (CMT). This project between Monterey Bay region's CyberCoast and the emerging Venetian 'Silicon Lagoon' will certainly offer great opportunities for success to all innovative and sophisticated American companies who are willing to team up with well-established local SMEs in Italy for distribution agreements, strategic alliances, subsidiaries or service contracts," comments Tony Livoti, Director of MBITA.

FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VENETO REGION

- a) small to medium-sized enterprises;
- b) coexistence of traditional products with technologically advanced equipment;
- c) internationalization of markets and organizational flexibility.

For more details and reservations contact the MBITA office.

Global eCommerce peers into future at CEO Summit in San Francisco

by Tony Livoti



Washing machines that talk to you, or you to them? Business suits you wear that keep you connected to the net, anytime anywhere? Yes, these and other wireless appliances you would think are right out of an Orwell novel rather than the latest and greatest from a dot.com startup or some industry giant are now on the march into our daily lives.

Recently these topics were discussed in detail by leading CEO's of the Information Technology industry at **The Internet Everywhere** CEO Summit held last February 28th through March 1st at the Weston Hotel in San Francisco.

MBITA had the pleasure and opportunity to attend this prestigious conference as a guest of the Internet World Media Group of Penton who publish the mainstream Bible of the Internet industry, the *Internet World Magazine* (<http://www.internetworld.com>). Presenters such as Phillippe Kahn of *LightSurf Inc.*, *Starfish Software* and *Borland International* fame, John Patrick of *IBM's* powerful Internet Technology division and other notable information technology leaders discussed how the ubiquitous world of wireless technology will not only rapidly change the way we conduct Global business in the years to come, but also will have profound implications on our privacy, culture and day-to-day lives.

"It's just beginning! Only 3% of the world population is online", stated Alex (Sandy) Pentland, Academic Head of *MIT Media* who was one of the conference speakers. "We can't imagine what it will be like in our business and private lives ten years from now", he continued. Sandy is also founder of the *IEEE Computer Societies' Wearable Computer* task force where he and his cohorts are inventing, testing and analyzing these new pervasive appliances.

Jacob Ner-David, Co-founder and CEO of *Delta Three* was also a speaker at the conference and was touting the emergence of the smaller, cheaper and more accessible internet now being 'rolled-out' by his company to the 'haves' and 'have-Nots' of the Global economy. "The most remote villages in developing countries will be able to present their arts and crafts to a marketplace they would have never been able to reach before the internet", says Jacob. "Wireless technologies will have a profound effect on the lives of these people in a very positive way", concluded Mr. Ner-David.

MBITA, as a proponent of Global eCommerce and E-learning for the international trade industry, foresees a global economy where any businessperson in any country will be able to find and qualify a foreign buyer, negotiate and "sign-off" on a contract notarized and authenticated by an independent third party, implement paperless documentation online to the freight forwarding and insurance companies, and then consummate the transaction by applying for a letter of credit online while complying with all its terms and conditions with paperless methods.

E-learning will also be an important aspect of Global eCommerce. Trading partners, especially in developing countries, who are new to the process of an international business transaction, will be trained at the convenience of their remote appliance or desktop computer. Cost-efficient and effective international trade will really emerge when both trading partners will use the same internet tools to initiate, implement and then consummate an international business transaction.



Conducting international business from a remote corner of Western Africa miles from a major city with only your cell phone and laptop computer at your disposal? No problem...you still will be able to hear your email message requesting a quote from your American buyer through wireless text-to-speech technology, and then promptly respond with a paperless Pro Forma invoice through your wireless laptop.

After I left the conference and was driving back to Santa Cruz from San Francisco I had some solemn time to reflect on what I had learned from the Internet Everywhere conference. I started to think about my normal workday now, in front of a computer, wherever it might be located, responding to email and utilizing powerful international web sites to do my job as the executive director of an international trade association. Five years earlier, I was saddled to the desk at my office with my trusty phone pressed to my ear. Then I remembered that only 3% of the world's population is now online.... whew! Hang on folks, the Internet train is just leaving the depot, or should I say the Magnetic Levitation train.

MBITA instructor-led online trainings

Curriculum



1. How to use the Internet, CD ROMS, Fee-based online databases and logistical software applications to effectively market and logistically transact your product or service to the global marketplace

2. How to use the new info-technologies for negotiating and contractual procedures

3. How and where to get online shipping and logistics resources

4. How to use online international banking resources

For more information visit our web site at: <http://www.mbita.org>



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Cristina Polesel

World Tradewind Publisher-MBITA
Editor-Cristina Polesel
✉ 725 Front Street

Santa Cruz, CA 95060
ph.: (831) 469-0148
fax: (831) 469-0917
info@mbita.org
For membership information go to
<http://www.mbita.org>

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 30
**TRANSATLANTIC VIDEOCONFERENCE
WITH ITALY**

*An export opportunity for Silicon Valley
high-tech business community*

*Hartnell College Videoconference Center,
Salinas.*

May 31
WORLD TRADE MONTH SYMPOSIUM
*Trade, Labor & the Environment: How can
they work together?*
World Trade Club, San Francisco

*For further events go to <http://www.mbita.org>
and click on "Events"*

CRISTINA POLESEL
World TradeWinds eZine Editor

Monterey Bay International Trade Association (MBITA)

725 Front Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060