

# **Learning from the Past: “Wired City” to Wireless Society**

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*Abstract:* Three periods of time involving multi-media communications and their impact on society are discussed and compared in this talk. These periods are the 1970s, with focus on the then newly-developing cable TV and the resultant concept of the “Wired City”; the mid-1990s, with the focus moving to the then novel idea of multi-media wireless communications; and, finally, the present, with the focus on 4<sup>th</sup>-generation heterogeneous wireless systems and discussion of a possible Wireless Society developing in the future.

The Wired City concept of the 1970s involved the possible use of interactive cable TV and telephony to change the delivery of medicine and education, among other activities, as well as provide the ability to shop and work from home. Experiments were carried out on this concept, and related Videotex standards were developed worldwide. These visions of communications changing society globally in a dramatic way were ultimately not successful at the time, but did anticipate the advent of the Information Age in which we currently live. In the talk, we move on from the cable-TV-based communications proposals of the 1970s and early 1980s to the period of the mid-1990s, in which we switch gears, to describe research proposed at the time on 3<sup>rd</sup>-generation multi-media *wireless* communications. We note that those proposals resonate with, and are closely related to, research currently being carried out on wireless networks of the future. We conclude the talk by noting the proliferation of these presumably-competitive wireless systems, and ask the question, will this all lead to a future Wireless Society, reminiscent of the Wired City concept of 35 years ago?