

# Introduction

## Using this report

The report is divided into three parts, each with a different purpose.

### Part I

Part I sets down the key information technology trends, their relative importance and their rate of progress. Business readers may choose to skip directly to Part II, but wherever time permits they are encouraged to review this section, as the underlying technology trends provide a foundation for adapting ideas and plans when breakthroughs occur, or when developments take an unexpected turn. Part I has been written as concisely as possible with the business reader in mind.

### Part II

Part II is devoted exclusively to forecasts about industry, organisations and work. From the point of view of the business innovator, this is the most valuable material: each prediction offers a point that can be communicated and debated, and which can trigger new ideas about opportunities and emerging challenges. Managers are encouraged to discuss and workshop predictions with colleagues in the context of the products, services, markets, competitors and goals that apply to their business. The content is organised into sections grouped under business themes. Rather than conforming to a rigid taxonomy, the sections have been selected to communicate the most important changes that lie ahead. The sections may be read consecutively, or selectively to match current business priorities.

### Part III

Part III is an extensive collection of materials spanning analysis, insights, examples, references, additional reading and online resources. It is designed to be used as a reference while reading other sections of the report. Subscribers that receive this report electronically will find all cross-referencing fully hyperlinked and may click on the numbered tags to go directly to the relevant endnotes.

## Purpose

This report was created to help businesses innovate. Over the next ten years information technology developments will change, profoundly, the way business is conducted. Early planning, and response, to these developments is critical to sustained business performance. It is intended for people in all types of roles—CEOs, innovation managers, strategists, financial officers, product managers—to equip them with knowledge, creativity and foresight as they try to plan for the future and turn this change into opportunity. It is also intended for government executives and policy makers, and to be used by managers in technology companies and R & D organisations with responsibilities for developing new market opportunities.

In order to provide as much value as possible in this context, the *Future of Business*:

- Focuses squarely on business outcomes, with the technological details playing a supporting role.
- Is written in plain English, with a minimum of technical jargon, to make it as accessible as possible.
- Provides a single, comprehensive framework to cut through the millions of pages written on IT & business that no manager has time to assimilate, and to elevate the manager past ad hoc learning via news items, conversations and occasional seminars.
- Spans all types of business processes, with examples across all types of industries, to introduce as many different ideas and innovations as possible.
- Takes a far-reaching view to equip the business person to think beyond the developments already well known to competitors.

## Scope

### Forecast horizon

The scope of this report is the next ten years. The goal is to make forecasts based on real information, even if the information is occasionally very thin, and to avoid stepping into the realm of pure speculation. Ten years is a reasonable limit to forecasts based on known developments in computer science, business and society. Equally, short term forecasts dealing in months rather than years are excluded because they fall into the realm of conventional wisdom, and are of little value to an audience seeking to innovate and build lasting competitive advantage. Furthermore, the market for short term analysis is already well served by stock analysts and consultants.

A small number of predictions beyond the ten year horizon have been included where they clarify or emphasise a particularly important trend.

### Geographic focus

This edition of the *Future of Business* is focused on three countries—the United States, United Kingdom and Australia—which share many common characteristics and contain most of the audience for S2 Intelligence research conducted between 2002 and 2007. Except where otherwise specified, all trends and predictions apply to the future of business in these countries. Readers with a focus on other geographies are encouraged to re-interpret or adjust predictions based on their knowledge of the local context.

### Organisational focus

Although a variety of predictions are included that deal with small and medium sized businesses, the organisational focus of this report is on large organisations (enterprises employing more than 200 people). Except where otherwise specified, all of the trends and predictions apply to the future of business in large organisations.