

Internet of Things ready to roll locally next year, say analysts

Internet of Things (IoT) technology will be ready take off in Thailand next year, boosted by the arrival of fourth-generation (4G) wireless broadband networks and the proliferation and affordability of of internet-connected devices, say IT analysts.



Vatsun Thirapatarapong, managing director of Cisco Systems (Thailand), speaks in a forum about Internet of Things technology. (Cisco Systems (Thailand) photo)

The availability of IoT skills with knowledge of embedded systems will also be a major factor driving IoT development and adoption here. "The IoT will play a very important role in outlining the country's digital path and support the government's digital economy initiative," said Vatsun Thirapatarapong, managing director of Cisco Systems (Thailand), the local operating unit of the California-based IT networking firm.

The IoT is a network of physical objects or "things" embedded with electronics, software and network connectivity, enabling these objects to collect and exchange data.

It allows objects to be sensed and controlled remotely across existing network infrastructure, creating opportunities for more direct integration between the physical world and computer-based systems, , resulting in improved efficiency, accuracy and economic benefits.

"Cisco estimates 25 billion devices globally are connected to the internet in 2015, doubling to 50 billion by 2020," Mr Vatsun said.

"It will create as much as UScopy9 trillion in global opportunities by 2020."

Cisco sees a massive opportunity in Thailand for a wide range of industries to capitalise on IoT technology.

Next year, Cisco plans to collaborate with several local universities to introduce the Cisco Networking Academy, a global education initiative by Cisco Systems, which will offer networking courses to allow students to learn from IoT use cases.

In Asean, Mr Vatsun said Cisco invested copy0 million in a venture-capital fund focused on the IoT and other emerging technologies.

Panutat Tejasen, president of the Thailand IoT Consortium, which gathers together 15 IoT-related private companies and state agencies, said the IoT presented startling opportunities for hardware makers in Thailand, especially wireless sensors and embedded systems programming.

"Given the country's resources of highly technically skilled engineers and industrial manufacturing bases, the advent of the IoT will undoubtedly shake up things in a number of industries," he said.

Mr Panutat said smart home automation or the connected home market was expected to enjoy mass adoption next year, driven mainly by a greater variety of

wearable devices, more affordable embedded system programming and high-speed wireless broadband internet.

Thailand's software market including mobile apps has matured. The IoT can widen ecosystems and create new value chain opportunities for the software industry.

The National Electronics and Computer Technology Center also plans to launch Net Pie, a network platform to provide support for IoT developers.

Amarit Charoenphan, co-founder of Hubba, Thailand's first co-working space service provider, said investment in IoT start-ups in Thailand remained small.

As of the middle of this month, Thailand's tech start-ups raised a total of \$54.5 million for 53 projects, up from only three projects valued at \$2.1 million in 2012.

Globally, Mr Amarit cited a report by venture capital database firm CB Insights that 887 IoE start-ups raised \$7.4 billion in the past five years.

Kanchana Kanchanasut, vice-president for research at the Asian Institute of Technology, said a series of research activities had been designed to serve the wave of technological change that would bring unprecedented opportunities along with new risks to business and society.

