obviate the need for cables but introduce additional issues, such as the need for increased security.

The security infrastructure may include the use of biometrics and other authentication systems, encryption, use tracking, and digital rights management software to verify that copyright holders' rights haven't been violated. With the melding of voice and data in most of corporate America, the telecommunications infrastructure is taking on increasing significance in supporting traditional phone and teleconferencing.

On the Horizon

The technologies most likely to have a significant impact on Knowledge Management soon deal with systems integration, the process in which different computer applications and systems are connected so that they can share data. Since the applications in a typical corporation often are cobbled together from different vendors, purchased years apart, and running on different hardware, system integration is usually a custom programming task. As a result, system integration can take months of effort, considerable expense, and have only mixed results. An alternative to integrating one or more applications into an existing infrastructure is to purchase an integrated set of tools, commonly marketed as content management software and hardware.

The most promising technologies in the system integration arena are *Web services* and *Application Service Provider (ASP)* tools. Web services involve the use of the Web to provide a standard means of sharing data between applications, whereas ASP technology provides knowledge workers with access to software through a Web browser, negating the need for corporation to purchase and run copies of the software locally. This reliance on the Internet and other networks is increasingly common, as in outsourcing storage through Internet-based storage area networks and storage service providers instead of purchasing huge servers in-