

ThoughtPoint

10 For '10: Convergence Trends For 2010

1. Real time web

What do we do with information? We gather it, analyze it, store it, share it and collate & morph it. Now think of this happening simultaneously, in real time, continuously, every second.

Real time information is not new obviously, financial markets have used it for decades but In 2010 we will see the significant growth of real time services for the layperson. Collecta is a search engine that finds only real time information. Google and Yahoo have recently integrated twitter updates into search results.

2. Broadband/ Internet TV

Whether through Sky or through Canvas, the Internet will certainly reach the Television set in a big way this year. Sky have already enabled a slew of services that allow you to get premium TV content on your laptop (or even on your phone). There are also any number of “hybrid” set-top-boxes that allow you to get content from the Internet, from Freeview and from your PC or Laptop to stream to your TV Set.

3. Connected Homes

The “Connected Home” is really 4 (or even 5) markets rolled into one. These are the productivity & entertainment market, the home security market, the energy management market and the assisted (or assistive) living market. Although the phrase “assistive living” is currently used in connection with disability, in future all of us will benefit from assisted living technologies in more ways than one.

2010 will also see a boost in the smart metering and home surveillance markets. Though media and entertainment oriented products will dominate.

4. Location Based Social Networking

We see location based social networking taking off in a big way in 2010. There are already plenty of services launched to take advantage of this phenomena. It won't be just trusted networks of friends, but even dating, events and business networks will be greatly benefited by this.

Twitter bought Mixer Labs to allow people to disclose geolocation of tweets. Other services such as Gowalla, Foursquare, HotPotato, GeoAPI, SimpleGeo and of course Google will all be in this space.

5. Google Goes For World Domination

There is a final battle brewing – like a technology Ragnarok – and that battle will probably be between Google on the one side and Apple-Microsoft-Yahoo on the other. We're not predicting exactly when that battle will be and who will survive, but suffice it to say that Google will be everywhere in 2010.

From the Nexus One phone to the Android operating system, to apps in the iPhone, book publishing, YouTube, Google Maps and travel services, Google Wave, Google Docs and Chrome, the Google browser, Google really does want to be everywhere. Lest we forget, there's Gmail, Analytics, Googlesites and of course the AdSense and search products where all the money is made.

6. Augmented Reality & Real World Web

2010 will be a year when we will hear the phrases "Augmented Reality" and the "Internet of Things" often enough for them to enter our lexicon, and our conversations. Augmented reality is fundamentally the ability to layer information onto the real world. A good example is the Layar browser, which pulls information from the Internet as you point your mobile camera at a building or a landmark.

Most importantly this blurs the line between the physical and virtual worlds. With face recognition, you might be able to see people's recent updates (on Twitter or Facebook) as you turn the camera on them.

7. There's App For Everything

The significant advancement in this thinking in recent years has been the success of Facebook and Apple in allowing 3rd parties to use their platforms (one an Internet platform, the other a mobile phone) to build applications, effectively creating giant marketplaces for app-creation. Though Apple has cornered the publicity around this, and certainly taken a massive early lead, the iPhone apps marketplace is by no means the only one of its kind. BlackBerry Apps World (RIM), Android Market (Google), Windows Mobile Marketplace (Microsoft) and many others inhabit this space.

8. Paid Content, Just Not The Way It's Done Currently

Rupert Murdoch has decreed that in 2010, NewsCorp will start charging for content online. This would include The Times (& presumably The Sun at some point) in the UK. The Johnston Press is trialling paid content for some regional titles. Could 2010 be the year of paid content? Well, we think that this model will find root but not in the ways that are possibly imagined currently.

People already pay for content now. The Financial Times has a reasonably successful paid model going and so do any number of specialized trade journals. It's the general interest and everyday news which is (a) not unique to any newspaper and (b) is not specialized content, where the challenge lies.

9. Ubiquitous Connectivity and The Erosion Of Privacy

We live in a permanently connected state. Increasingly, being connected is the default stage. Be it from a laptop, a netbook or a smartphone, we are almost always able to reach out and "touch" the virtual world. As a consequence we are also increasingly living our lives in public.

The constant connectivity is no longer big news, but the social implications of a permanently connected life are going to be felt over the next few months. We also expect connectivity to become a central policy issue as its implications are better understood.

10. Advertising innovation/ product placement & CRM

As the broadcast industry recognizes the long term limitations of traditional advertising, there will be a scramble to find innovations to prop up or replace advertising revenues. One of the big changes in the UK will be the long pending introduction of product placement, which will need new measurement systems before they can be effectively adopted on a large scale.

This will also be the year when CRM becomes strategic for many broadcasters. Both to protect TV revenues and to augment it through alternative platforms.

(A full version of this paper is available on request.)

About ThinkPLANK

ThinkPLANK is a consulting and projects company. Our core areas include business change, digital convergence strategies, requirements gathering, user experience and strategic offshoring. We also deliver projects in these areas.

Some of the things we are currently working on in 2010 include The Connect Home, Exploiting Content Value, Transformation of Broadcasting from Channel to Asset centric businesses and defining new television experiences.