
Subject: Innovations that changed media consumption
Posted by [Madison](#) on Wed, 29 Apr 2020 14:22:52 GMT

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It feels like our audio-visual landscape changes at a rapid pace for better or for worse. Take smart speakers and smart televisions for instance. You tell the AI what you want to hear or see and it comes on. It's pretty handy. Even though it was a controversial invention at first, it has become so popular that smart capabilities are increasingly built into the latest speakers, televisions, radios, projectors, remote controls, and soundbars that hit the market. As a result, we're slowly bringing up a generation who can't consume media any other way. They don't know how to work the controls manually, and they can't troubleshoot their setup when things go wrong, beyond performing a factory reset and letting the AI do its thing again. And hey, with the rate that buttons are disappearing from our gadgets, it won't be long before there are no manual controls to work anyway.

Which innovations do you feel have had the biggest impact on our media consumption over the past decade?

Subject: Re: Innovations that changed media consumption
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 29 Apr 2020 14:54:53 GMT

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Please forgive a slight digression and meandering interjection before I make my point.

My career started before there was any digital audio/video media, and at that time, I was very interested in digitizing analog signals, storing them and playing them back through a DAC. I was also interested in speech recognition, optical character recognition and machine learning, especially in the field of robotics. I liked the applications of that in cars with internal combustion engines too, mostly for high-performance applications. The first half of my career was in that time.

So it is ironic to me - now that all that has come to pass - I don't really want to use any of those technologies. In some part, I am being nostalgic, using technologies of my youth. In another part, it might be that the novelty has worn off. It's not cool future tech anymore. But those things wouldn't prevent me from embracing these technologies for the benefits they bring.

I think the biggest reason I shun some of the smart devices is because I know how easy it is for bad actors to hack them. Or for that matter, "good actors" that I feel a little uncomfortable with being in my cyberspace. I feel like Uncle Sam and Aunt Google would be living with me - in my living room, in my car, even in my bedroom - if I were to invite them in by using most smart devices. They're like a creepy neighbor or a stalking butler.

So I'm definitely of two minds about smart devices. On one hand, they're very convenient and useful. They do great things that aren't possible to do manually, like gather data on engine performance every millisecond and adjust air/fuel and timing accordingly. But on the other hand, that data can be used against you in court, in insurance rates and in a variety of other ways.

And then on the third other hand (think Zaphod Beeblebrox), that data can be used for good purposes too, data mining for trends and predictions. There is a certain class of metadata (or maybe I should say megadata) that can find the most interesting and useful facts by combing through large amounts of seemingly unrelated data. Like predicting the outcome of elections simply by knowing how many people bought chocolate on a Tuesday. That's a silly exaggeration, but it is amazing what kinds of things can be discovered and predicted using large data samples.

To me, that's probably the biggest innovation. It's weird - and even kind of creepy - but it's real.

Subject: Re: Innovations that changed media consumption

Posted by [Leot55](#) on Fri, 01 May 2020 16:49:46 GMT

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Interesting post, Wayne! That was a great read. I'm just the opposite in that my instant reaction is to recoil from new tech because I don't like change and I know how we're being monetized and commodified. However, I buy the gear as soon as the bugs are worked out and I typically enjoy it. I guess it almost feels inevitable and I don't want to be behind the curve. I'm only nostalgic for things that were made better back in the day - more durable and made with quality materials - but much of what we have today is an improvement in terms of options and convenience.

@Madison, I think streaming options have made the biggest impact. Streaming led to the further decline of radio channels and their audience. Streaming led to many of us cutting the cord on cable. Netflix, Hulu, Spotify, are all fantastic, or at least they were at first. Unfortunately, prices started going up and exclusive deals were reached which meant we needed to pay for more than one service. Then cable got smart and started offering some shows only on their own streaming service like Picard on CBS All Access. So, even if you pay for cable, you'll still need to subscribe to that other service. One thing cable hasn't done is lower their prices, which is usually how businesses react when they're losing customers. That part is interesting to me. Basically, I think it's a constant battle between consumers and big companies.

Subject: Re: Innovations that changed media consumption

Posted by [Silver](#) on Fri, 15 May 2020 14:08:57 GMT

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These innovations have come fast and furious and the changes they have brought have been a little mind-blowing. It is hard to say which one had the most effect though. That's like asking which girl is hotter. The answer is subjective.

Subject: Re: Innovations that changed media consumption

Posted by [Kingfish](#) on Sat, 03 Oct 2020 05:48:31 GMT

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For music connoisseurs like me, the biggest invention is how You Tube makes mixes based on what you listen to. The same songs and songs with the same beat, prominent chords, etc..... I actually saved a few mixes that I didn't make myself because they were that good.

To me, music puts a vibe in whatever space you're listening to it in. So when an AI type program can put a vibe in my car, for instance, that is just as good or better then what I would have done, I take notice.

Subject: Re: Innovations that changed media consumption

Posted by [gofar99](#) on Sat, 03 Oct 2020 18:12:19 GMT

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Hi Everyone, I'm with Wayne. I like and use a lot of technology. Some ancient, some new. I shy away from any new "automation" especially stuff that controls things around the house. Too easy to allow someone else to hack some of it. If bad actors can hack major companies that have very high performance security then the only real salvation for us mortals is either not use stuff that can be hacked or accept that our only real protection is that the bad guys are not interested in us personally.
