

Welcome to the Click Society: 2008 mega trends

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We are simply not alone any longer, anywhere or anytime... not even in the most private rooms and quiet spaces that we so dearly cherish. All that beautiful décor and openness that we think is filled with fresh air is actually jam packed with zillions of invisible wireless messages, electronic signals, streaming videos and all kinds of pulses that are fast forwarding our cyber-society of today.

The special eyewear that's currently under rapid-development to enable a three-dimensional spectrum view of digital flow in thin air, as seen in *The Matrix*, where free-floating, streams of digital information will surround us and shock our thinking. These digital signals cover us like a thick blanket, watching and awaiting every single electronic interaction of ours, recording, updating and profiling our habits and patterns based on consumption.

Deeply submerged in the cyber-ocean of information, there are two outcomes to this. Firstly, our existence as a hyper-consuming subject, the second is an interactive profiling system, built on super-sponge-technology that scans our present movements to predict our future ones, offering products and solutions which parallel the speed of our thinking. Sounds too sci-fi crazy, but in reality, it's yesterday's news.

There's more information about us out there this very second, than we can imagine.

A digital state

After all, we're living under amazing times, like a very fast game of ping-pong, constant action and reaction to just about everything we act upon is being championed.

It's so fast and so instant that it boggles the mind; any of your actionable pulses could go and come back around the globe in a split of a second. See? It just did. Technology has seriously flattened the earth and truly curved our daily lives; where cyber lifestyles have us spinning into yogurt while the clocks seem going double the speed. It's hard to figure out with all the supposed ease of technology and open access where the time goes. Hours seem to be shrinking into minutes. Seconds? What seconds? The hamster style mobility of the daily grind is keeping most of us from revolting. Even matters of distance have disappeared; you forget where you were few hours ago, which block, which airport, which Starbuck's, which country? The increasingly digital state of today's world has almost eliminated the dimension of time.

This digital miniaturization has blossomed into an interactive-hyper-connected world of mobile technology that has taken over as the most powerful of all new mediums so far. In this setting, the entire world becomes the largest shopping mall, the customer becomes the most powerful prowler, in search of deals, a universe of product and services opens up and only

those organizations with commanding knowledge of global marketing response, cyber branding and cyber mobility are poised to make it in this curved space.

Also in the mix, a soup of multiple technologies and multiple skills combined to adopt multiple messages and unified under a master plan. These future products will hunt us down at the right time and opportunity, coming into play at that critical second just before the purchase decision; striking like a moray eel when a little guppy gets closer. It's now like walking into thin air where you see absolutely nothing but the cyber blanket of invisible pulses and wireless information closely wrap around you; hugging you, having full access to knowledge about what credit cards you have in your pockets, your favorite magazines and your major purchases of the last year; all nicely alphabetically organized and manipulated to evaluate your taste, habits, preferences and even deep intentions.

Your age, gender, habits and occupational profile are all digital blueprints to decode your identity, style and spending. The cyber cloud hovers all around you as you approach various shops and your PDA beeps to inform you about a great offer on that watch you wanted, or will alert your bank about a potential overdraft when you enter a diamond shop. Failing to signal when changing lanes now appears on the balance of your next car insurance policy. No, this isn't a movie script, it's old news.

Outbound noise and inbound specificity

These zillions of day-to-day, small online interactions add up, collectively developing your consumption profiles. The system can easily determine when you and how many of your friends are planning a trip to Rio, with what budget, and what airline. This information is a goldmine to some in the travel business, while the same goes to hundreds of other various sectors. This highly qualified specificity has created a meltdown in the traditional world of advertising, which was historically based on creating wild outbound noise with bottomless budgets.

A great thing a century ago, but the online era is founded upon the specific pulse of inward consuming traffic.

The total change of old-media-structure is upon us. The last century gave us print society, where the printed word was power, and when only the literate could benefit from information, the ad industry started with a bang. The selling of goods and branding for mass consumerism became the bridge to most of the global economies and the concepts to produce and sell, earn and spend created the modern civilization. The conveyor belts of the process were managed by the ad industry and the herds of consumers were managed by the creative dangling of carrots by ads... today and each and every single day, the global ad industry easily spends over a billion dollars creating various types of branding and selling messages.

But now, most current online and cyber advertising techniques are meticulously precise, measurable and predictable. They have trimmed all the non essential extra creative AD luggage and mega budgets that allowed for the arrival of the MAD Men TV series produced by the same team behind The Sopranos, correctly portraying the ad-machine that once created public hysteria and great consumer demands, but now lingers upon extinction like a dinosaur. This global rejection of the traditional ad-game is all over us, affecting newspapers, TV and all other ad based mediums while a new trace-able, track-able, predictable, ROI model of one-to-one advertising, sell-first-bill-later is getting a stronger hold.

The challenges are on two fronts. Firstly, a continuously modified mass scale selling of goods and services using traditional models which have fared well in the past. Secondly, the urgent need of highly exuberant structures of specialized global service agencies, connecting customers on a one-to-one, per-need basis, using hyper-connected, cyber-marketing-processes. Both fronts are very serious and work towards creating a major shift. Ad shops have always excelled at the creativity component which separated them from the other related service sectors. They are once again required to come up with better ideas and solutions, as on the net, it now takes only seconds to copy, cut and paste the same recycled campaigns and their value being erased at cyber speed. The winners and losers will be determined based on speed to market response.

'End of advertising as we know it'

IBM's current study: 'The END of advertising as we know it' is a forceful document downloadable from their website. It clearly points how the old advertising models, crazy creativity that is now being replaced by highly organized pay-per-click formats, creating direct sales for clients on a sell-first, invoice-later basis.

This creates a two fold meltdown, one in which those agencies which remain still locked down in old models and other is the traditional free media worldwide which so far heavily relied on the Ad revenue.

2008 boom times

Clicks and more clicks. Anything that generates a click and results in a cascade of events will boom. There will be special gadgets to special services, from special click-based programs to special offerings. A kind of new click-sound to the click-economy, supporting search engine-based marketing, where the emphasis will be placed on finding a match between a customers and immediate consumption issues is where advertising and marketing will park themselves. The middlemen or the layer of services will offer clear, ROI-based campaigns and will, at times, have a huge surprise windfall for their highly productive campaigns as extra bonuses. Though, at the same time the big drawback will be privacy, as there will be extraordinary amounts of information made available to target customers.

The New Trends

A new emergence of a global desire to aim and create a Five Star Standard businesses is almost upon us, just like a five star hotel, with services, quality and style, this desire to operate a business and offer services just like a five star standard hotel will reflect not only on the corporate brand and the product and services as goodwill ambassadors, but mainly in its hospitable services and 24-hour availability of staff to address those issues. The difference between a luxury home and a five star hotel is the hotel keeps an on-call staff, open switchboard, open kitchen the entire facility and the room service. This is how the corporations of the new era will have to function in order to earn the respect in a click based round the clock society.

Asia is now beginning to offer 24-hour, fully-supported banking, buying and selling of properties, insurance, travel, and all kinds of hundreds of new services.

Now, the customer demands and decides whenever, whatever and wherever the need is to be met. Only the players equipped to meet these spontaneous demands will have a chance. The creation of a fully supported, 24-7 operation that will never close and perform transactions instantly is the new future. You would like to own those special glasses to see that blanket of streaming data hugging you right now... wouldn't you?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Naseem Javed is recognized as a world authority on corporate image and cyber-branding and creating global-name-identities. Author of **Naming for Power**, he introduced 'The Laws of Corporate Naming' in the 80's and also founded ABC Namebank International, a consultancy established in Toronto and New York a quarter century ago. Currently, Javed is on a lecture tour in Dubai and can be reached at nj@njabc.com or www.abcnamebank.com.

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