

# Seamless media consumption

Multiple media sources are instantly integrated at the point of consumption to provide us with immersive access to tailored, bite-sized content.

How we access and consume information has undergone rapid change over the past few years. The rise of platforms including Google, YouTube, Netflix, Facebook, Twitter and the BBC iPlayer as well as the introduction of new devices such as net-books, IPTV, the iPhone and the iPad have all fundamentally affected how many of us now use and interact with media. Given that all of these appeared in the last decade, as we look forward to 2020, many expect even greater change as the acceleration of new technologies increases.

While some of the new platforms and devices that will have an impact are yet to be invented, many others are already in development and being planned for mainstream rollout. As such, there are several impending shifts already visible as we look at the future of media creation, sharing and consumption. How quickly they will occur and in what specific areas are open to debate and potential influence by existing media organisations, but the effects they will have over the next ten years are becoming clear. In recent times, the concept of seamless consumption has been much hyped as an impending reality but has yet to be delivered. It now appears that many of the key technologies and business models to enable it to happen are all starting to align: the *Wired* magazine app on the iPad, which allows intuitive browsing between text, video and image manipulation, is a

leading signal of where we are heading. Research at MIT's Media Lab and multiple TED presentations also focus on how options for consumption are changing.

A future in which we can all access a host of alternative media sources as we switch between many different devices from multiple sources in a smooth and seamless manner is increasingly evident. By 2020, this will be ubiquitous and the norm for many of us: our PCs, mobiles and TVs will have merged and become integrated with a host of new devices that allow us to access a global library of information and data. Everything that has ever been filmed, written, created or captured will be organised and indexed automatically and be available to us all. All content, including that which has just been created, will be tagged and available to be shared by anyone and everyone through fully open data archives. Initially

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led by public broadcasters but capitalised on by new text, image and video search engines, the web will automatically organise the most relevant material for us. TV feeds, amateur video, relevant text and data will all be auto-assembled for us and around us with the final edit taking place at the point of consumption. Everyone will have a continuously updated, unique and tailored mix of different media that gives each of us exactly the information we want.

Talking to the experts in the space, not only will we be presented with this constantly evolving mix of content, but augmented video and text will provide additional information as a layer on device screens and within holographic projections. Seamless media access and consumption will, it is predicted, be a richer and deeper, more tailored experience. While a good proportion of us will still want the sit-back-and-relax passive consumption as opposed to the more interactive and participative option, how and what we consume will become more sophisticated and less linear. Your TV will instinctively know your preferences (and favourites) and so sense and suggest similar and new material to best fit your mood. We will access information not via a remote control, touch pad or mouse, but by using gestures very similar to those seen in the movie *Minority Report* and already being introduced in a simpler form by Xbox. Images, video and data will be gathered, selected, explored and shared intuitively in 3D and provide you with a fully immersive experience – if you so desire. In many ways the distinction between content forms will break down completely as all media sources, from TV, film and radio to news, blogs and networks, are integrated and cross-linked. Bite-sized, tagged segments of video, audio and text will be reassembled for you and by you around topics of interest.

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As all this technology is integrated to allow the constantly evolving and seamless access to information of all sorts, the business models of the organisations which provide the source material will be radically altered. Just as the fundamental dynamics of the music industry were reinvented in the past few years, so over the next few will many parts of the rest of the media industry. In the TV industry, the role of media companies will shift from one of being creators, commissioners, editors and schedulers of their broadcast content to being curators of everyone's material. They will provide viewers with access to a recommended repertoire of constantly evolving content drawn from their own and other companies' catalogues and mixed with increasingly sophisticated user-generated content. In many areas, the co-creation of material – where fans and the media industry reuse and reinterpret each other's content – will expand the 'pro-am' arena. Just as traditional A&R in the music industry has been replaced by the main labels tracking MySpace activity and signing up those acts that get 50,000 hits, so the wider media industry may shift its modus operandi. At the same time, increasingly demanding viewers will want guaranteed quality and relevance and so be prepared to pay for access to personalised sources for 'just the gems' – they will want all the highs and none of the lows and so the ability of

many broadcasters to fill in the gaps between peak programmes with lower quality material will be taken away.

As the next generation of consumers becomes the focus and also takes control of the media industry, gaming will increasingly set the standards. The expectations set in the multi-player, highly participative, interactive \$100 billion gaming industry, where integrated decision making, alternative outcomes and cross-referenced materials are the norm, will influence how the rest of the media industry thinks and behaves. Already we can see the influence of *Call of Duty*, *Grand Theft Auto* and *Halo* extending beyond the PC, PlayStation and Xbox into parallel worlds online as well as comment in the real world.

## *Gaming will increasingly set the standards.*

By 2020, the gaming experience will be a standard expectation for many. Adverts will no longer be found in breaks or in separate areas but will be fully embedded into media content. Enabled by new digital platforms, personalised product placement will occur within, not outside, core media and so the business models for many media companies will fragment. Many see that the next decade will be a time of reinvention for the media industry and traditional players, mobile operators, new platforms and globally open sources of material will all compete and coalesce in new ways. One way or another 'seamless consumption' will be the way ahead.



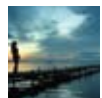
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Page 91



Page 137



Page 145