

May your forefinger be with you...

 By Sue Disler

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Upon entering a new decade while a mere 45 minutes away from civilisation (Cape Town) this summer, my observations of how technology has changed our lives have grown far more acute.

BIZ 2011 MARKETING TRENDS

Ten years ago...

There were no Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, BBM, WhatsApp, Skype and VOIP phones, digital/mobile TV, 3G, flash drives, the iTunes Store, the Kindle, Tablets and the list goes on... We still relied on a physical newspaper, TV or radio to give us the weather forecast and we consumed far less media to devour content. We actually spoke face-to-face or over landlines to our friends (our social reality) to find out which restaurants to go to, which movies to see, what car to buy etc... and we all owned a computer mouse!

We sat hunched at our desktops for hours and hours, suffered bad eye site, frozen shoulders, sore backs and necks, and some of us (including me) had to resort to dry needling to be virtually pain-free...



The fact that now I am sitting in bed (with a startling view of the sea and a 39 degree wind-free day ahead) with my MacBook, taking pictures courtesy of my iPhone, charging my iPad as the battery finally went dead after watching Season 4 of Dexter in HD (downloaded yesterday) and a marathon Scrabble game last night, plus writing this article... is indicative of what most people across the world have gotten used to.

So what's in store for 2011?

It's easy to come up with a list of what will/could be big this year (see below)... but in reality they all lead to one thing that will remain a constant: **on-the-go content experiences**.

We wolf down information and it's in our nature to want to be entertained, and today's mobile devices allow us to read, listen to music, watch movies and play games whenever or wherever we want. The experience itself has become so much more immersive than before and the interfaces that we are starting to navigate our way through are a designer's dream.

This is really exciting, as my biggest bugbear with Web 2.0 was it stripped out beautiful visual design. We wanted simple, quick and easy-to-download solutions to obtain information and we allowed our view to be more or less dictated to by programming techniques, bandwidth and file size. It were as if we were wading in a world of icons, icons and more icons that may have traversed language barriers but almost put us on the same planet as the Telly Tubbies!

We really need to thank the mobile phone and, particularly, the mobile app. Its role in starting to change our behaviour when interacting with content, coupled with a resurgence of 3D animation and design from CD-rom days gone by, is what's capturing our imaginations - again.

Touch technology transcends boundaries

Added to this, touch technology has allowed us to transcend the boundaries of the "old web", giving us far more instinctive ways to navigate through the clutter.

For those of us in South Africa, high-priced mobile data will continue to curb the majority of our population's immediate

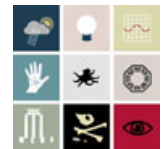
experience of these changes, but there are some we can all look out for:

1. Facebook or Google?
2. The tablet wars
3. The privacy wars
4. Apps, more apps and apps stores
5. Aggregated and segmented content
6. Geo-location and geo-content
7. Who owns the brand - the consumer or the brand?
8. Who breaks the news? Media sites (journalists) or social sites (bloggers, Twitter or Facebook)?
9. Monetisation - could the 99c app or in-app buying be the answer?
10. Engagement - what does it really mean?
11. The [mobile youth](#)

However you look at it, these are exciting times for us as marketers. The digital world has forced us to change the way we view our consumers and how we interact with them, and the insights have truly added another dimension to what we do. Guaranteed, we will still be kept on our toes.

So, here's to great design finally making its way back onto our screens, repetitive thumb syndrome and more real-world experiences. And while you're at it, please say a prayer for the dying mouse while your fingers do the walking.

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