

The Renaissance period is back and it's brilliant

 By [Chris Botha](#)

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I've been doing a lot of reading over the past few months. I'm not much of a fiction reader, and prefer the factual stuff, and besides, History was always my favourite subject at school, so reading up about people and periods really tickles my fancy. I recently read about the Renaissance period, and couldn't help but feel that it resembles so much of what we are going through today.



The Renaissance was the period between the 1300s and 1600s. During this period the world re-ignited (after the Crusades and the Black Plague). The world saw unprecedented growth, discovery and understanding. Worlds were explored and conquered, medicine and art advanced at exponential rates, technology and mechanisation started showing its head. Basically, all the discoveries of the previous thousand years got a “turbo boost” and the world blossomed.

The similarities between this period and our current reality, I believe, are startling. Media in South Africa has been going through a Renaissance second to none. But very often we need to rewind, in order to understand and appreciate where we are today. The medium called Television hit the SA media scene in 1976. At the time, SA had seven radio stations, a couple of billboards and 20 odd newspapers. I understand why “long lunches” were the order of the day. The next TV station only joined the fray eight years later in 1984. In my opinion, it was a very boring time to be alive as a media planner.

So fast forward to where we are today. We live in what I believe to be the most exciting period in the history of media. If you are a media planner worth your salt, I guarantee that you're learning something new and exciting every single day of your working career. The world of technology and data has revolutionised what is possible. Our paradigms of what can and can't be done literally shift daily.

I honestly believe we are only touching the tip of the iceberg! I recently read a book called *The Singularity* by a gentleman called Ray Kurzweil (scary stuff if you are a futurist). The future he paints is both terrifying and exciting. Technology doubles in its capacity every two years according to Gordon Moore, so what we know and understand today, will double in two years. The book goes on to speculate that humans will merge with technology, to form one being. It's highly possible, and incredibly exciting.

How fortunate we are to live and work in an industry and era that went from the first satellite TV feed in 1996 to the most advanced technological era as little as 20 years later. From being at a "satellite dish novelty" status, we can now target individual families on TV. From the most basic banner ad in the early 2000s, we've evolved to Programmatic Planning, where we track users and use their data to serve more relevant ads that benefit the consumer and the advertiser.

We are fortunate indeed. Let's open our eyes, and see what is happening around us. Let us embrace technology and show an eagerness to learn about it every day. Let us ride this wonderful wave of change, and enjoy the scenery as we go. We are fortunate indeed. And you know what? This is only the beginning of the renaissance. Strap in and enjoy the ride.

Article was originally published on [The MediaShop blog](#).

ABOUT CHRIS BOTHA

Chris Botha is Group Managing Director, The MediaShop, Johannesburg. Chris started his life in media when he was a student at the University of the Free State. He ran the local campus radio station (RSM) and was the proud presenter of the sport show.

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