

This year heralds the 'Planet of the Apps'

By  Anice Hassim

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This year will see us become the 'Planet of the Apps', with those addictive little downloads popping up on every screen - including your car dashboard, television and photo frames...



1. 'Apps, apps' everywhere:

Three billion downloaded, heading for a download rate of one billion per month... no question, Apple has kick-started a new modality. Expect to see apps everywhere...

2. Smart TVs:



Suddenly the humble television set is sexy again... and not just for DSTv or the SABC. Expect to see television redefined with online content, interactivity and exploration. You know how you are watching a movie and you think, hmm... wonder what the buzz on this is. You pick up your phone or laptop and head over to metacritic.com or imdb.com to see what others think or download some trivia.

Well, you'll now be able to do that on your TV. No phone or computer needed. So, yes, those "apps" will be on your television as well. [I want an Internet-enabled touchscreen TV on my fridge - acting

editor]

3. Location, location, location:

Geeks and marketers are going to sound like estate agents. The proliferation of devices kitted out with every sensor imaginable means that our phones are capable of situating us in 3D space. That will allow for the exploration of services and content in a specific geographic location in new and exciting ways.

Augmented reality will also allow for the overlay and merging of cyberspace with the real world... cool!

4. Boxee:

The software set top box that you can install on anything... Derived from the XBMC project, Boxee is a social media content service that merges Internet content, broadcast and info all in one. Install it onto your PC and you can dip into CNN on demand and YouTube etc on your computer or TV screen. Download at www.boxee.tv.

5. Apple:

Expect Apple to be at the 'nexus' of almost every significant development in tech. This stems from its uncanny ability to tune into what consumers actually want (perhaps it has proved the irrelevance of market research; can consumers really know what they want, if they don't know what is possible?).

The other reason is that it has built a foundation for the assembled brainpower of a planet to innovate on. The iPhone is a dream device bristling with every sensor imaginable and a powerful development environment. We're already taking some of this jaw-dropping innovation for granted and there's a ton more coming.

6. Goodbye Nokia, hello Android:

Expect Nokia to ship an Android phone. Its lawsuit against Apple is a last gasp of desperation. It has gazed at the product pipeline and realised that it simply cannot compete. Its friends in the networks are also telling it consumers want one of these new "app" phones.

The problem is there is space for two, maybe three, major players in the new mobile eco-system. Apple is king of the hill with the iTunes Store, digital distribution and the iPhone OS. Google is a worthy competitor, albeit it with a different philosophy to Apple. The last slot has Palm, Motorola and RIM seeing if they can lock it in. But it's too late for Nokia.

The best way to get into the game is to flavour Android (Google's open mobile operating system) to its handsets and offer the networks a phone they can compete with. That's what Motorola did and the 'Droid' is keeping it in the game.

7. Show me your existentialist angst:

People will tweet and blog mundane details of their boring lives in greater and greater detail. How ridiculous is it getting? Well, let me direct you to the growing phenomenon of suicidal thoughts and depression brought on by the 'unobtainium-ness' of them ever living in a world such as [Avatar's Pandora](#). I mean, can't these people get a real life?

8. Mom still won't answer her phone:

Sorry, technology, or as Ali G said, 'techmology' can only go so far. We can get that lump of plastic to emit ear-splitting sounds, but your mother/wife/girlfriend will be just as oblivious.

9. Just because it's digital, doesn't mean it's different:

Maybe 2010 will be the year that the industry realises that it doesn't matter if new media breaks the news. Someone still has to fly the chase helicopter, interview the bystanders etc. Print media in particular must realise it's not in the business of printing and distribution but rather in the business of content creation. The fact that it ends up on silicon instead of wood or plastic is meaningless. Give people what they want and they will pay for quality and convenience.

Proof of this is that my leisure reading volumes rocketed, after I got the Kindle e-book app for iPhone. Why? Because it is quick, easy and convenient. But do I still want to give Stig Larssen my bucks for an awesome Millennium trilogy? You bet I do and I did.

10. "It's a computer, Jim, but not as we know it..."

I have to add my two cents in on what [Apple will announce on 27 January 2010](#). The entire world is waiting to see what Steve has up his sleeve. Is it a Kindle-killer, a netbook killer...?

I believe it is going to be a killer all right, but a killer of our current computing paradigm of PC, screen, keyboard and mouse. Apple is going to shoot a hole in the head of its own industry and introduce a portable device that will redefine computing like the original Macintosh once did. Think small... a tablet, and think big too... a 60" Apple TV running the same OS as the tablet and suddenly all your apps, content and media are on your TV too....

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