

TECHNOLOGY IN BUSINESS



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CREATIVELY

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Adult Learning in Today's World

macdac engineering consultancy bureau
Ltd.

Technology In Business

ADULT LEARNING IN TODAY'S WORLD

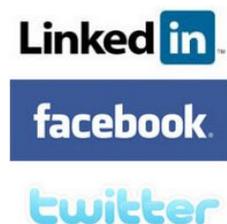
A couple of decades ago, technology in business might have reminded us of the office computer that has changed the typewriter to the standalone word processor and a printer. This didn't last long and soon become an increasingly connected environment of electronic devices that are connected together, work together, share information to ultimately connect to the rest of the world in a multitude of ways and possibilities. Technology in business is continuously becoming an **integrated environment** such that it does not matter much where you are on the globe when it comes to communication as long as you are 'connected'.

Smartphones

Smartphones are devices that have the functionality of mobile phones with added features of a personal computer. These devices have rapidly evolved due to great competition between the leading manufacturers. Besides these manufactures, the industry saw a rapid growth in content providers for these phones. Such content providers have created a new market of applications that run on these devices ranging from simple games to calendars, educational applications, marketing campaigns, data collection and advanced geographic navigation on the same device. Manufacturers realized that it is not the time anymore where they should do phones that are locked in a way that they work only with the software they provide. On the contrary, the more third-party content providers do applications for their phone, the more popular their product would be and the more it will potentially sell.



Social Networks



A radical innovation in technology has been the emergence of online social networks. We may love them or hate them but it is a fact that various businesses have seen great profit from such networks. This applies not only to the direct owners of the social networks but also to others who might not have anything much related to technology within their product or service but have been able to form and enlarge their network of clients, via such electronic means.

Collective Intelligent Searches

With the growth of the internet, businesses in recent years have been given the tool of Search Engines. While before searching for information that was outside the doors of the organisation was something complex and laborious, today with the use of search engines like Google and the rest, an organisation may instantly search for new suppliers, markets, products and also what competitors are doing! These search engines are increasingly becoming more intelligent by following what in the past have been the most



common searches done for the keywords entered. They are becoming collectively intelligent and each search you do, unknowingly will contribute to this collective intelligence for future searches.

Mobile transactions

Effecting financial transactions with the use of mobile phones seem to be one of the next technology revolutions in business. Business is in a constant need to make payments as simple and fast as possible so that it does not hinder a potential sale. Technology in the recent years has provided a number of solutions that moved business from the paper money to plastic money and online banking. The possibility of effecting payment via the personal mobile phone is up and running and although it is still not widely diffused, it is expected to reach critical mass in the months to come.



Figure 1: <http://www.mobiletor.com>

Tablet PC

The tablet pc has also been given strong visibility on media lately and has been presented as the new revolution of personal computers but such revolution is still at an early stage in being a truly effective tool in business. Tablet pc's are designed to be used by a single person as in the case of mobile phones but have the power of personal computers with a touch screen as the main input device. In education they offer a variety of training applications and are often excellent to use as a presentation device.



Figure 2: www.techshout.com

Video conferencing and Web casting

Video conferencing is entering the business environment at a rapid pace due to the advantages they offer, particularly the ability to make face to face meetings with persons that may be in other continents, without the need to travel. For the business, this saves money, time and certainly CO2 emissions. Skype is probably the most popular and provides free software to do one-to-one meetings. Other hardware-based systems allow a diversity of attendees in remote places to participate in meetings in real-time with a picture quality as good as the best television channel. Concurrent with video conferencing system we are seeing more and more businesses using Web-Casting technology. This is a way to broadcast events and meetings to anyone on the web at a fraction of the cost of traditional broadcasting systems.



Figure 3: www.lifesize.com

3D Displays

Although the technology of 3D displays is not new, it is only now that the 3D technology is diffusing and widely commercializing in business. This is mostly due to the development of new content that can be viewed in 3D such as the recent Avatar film and the live broadcasts of the 2010 World Cup in 3D via satellite. Beyond the entertainment industry, this new technology is being used in prototyping, simulators, advanced presentations, advertising and education.



Figure 4: <http://www.qeam.com>

Virtual Worlds

Virtual Worlds are being used in a multiplicity of business segments from education in say, disaster training, meetings, engineering simulation and testing, architecture designs, multiplayer games, social networking and even tourism. As the name implies, virtual worlds create a virtual online 3D environment in which a community can meet and share. This generates a degree of telepresence feeling through the use of an avatar: the virtual character that represents the user in the fantasy world. One of the largest known communities is Second Life developed by Linden Research and offers free software with which to enter the 3D environment and create your avatar. Avatars can generate virtual money (Linden Dollar) through offering services like creating and selling objects. The virtual money can be then converted to real money in real bank accounts.

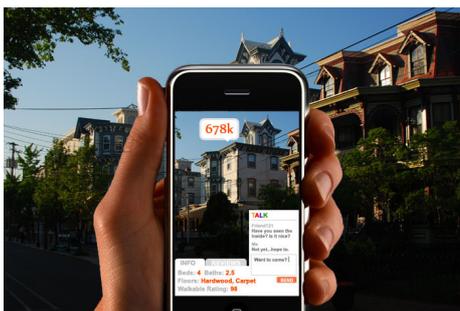
3D Printers

We may all be familiar with traditional printing in 2D from our inkjet and laser printers. New machines are able to print in three dimensions. Such printers are given information about a three dimensional object and they output the object in three dimensions within a few minutes. Some 3D Printers are able to use different materials, textures and colours to create the desired object. Such tools drastically shorten the time to develop prototypes, complex designs and models.



Figure 5: <http://www.image-acquire.com>

Augmented Reality



Augmented Reality is another emerging technology that is promising to revolutionize the way we gather information. The technology is still in its early stages. The objective is to capture real data such as a photo or video and insert additional data so that the 'real' captured data is more useful. A typical case may be an application on a mobile phone that is able to add text and location information to the video camera in real time. This may be highly useful not only for places of interests, as shown in the adjacent picture, but also in troubleshooting machines, following cooking recipes and security applications just to mention a few.

All these different emerging technologies are giving new opportunities to the organisations. While they all seem so diverse, all of them are ultimately about increasing communication, efficiency and productivity such that in due course the organisation gets better and/or new products or services with faster delivery times.