

This is the outline of David Pogue's talk called, "The Digital Generation Grows Up."

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Trend #1: Cellphone + Internet

I'll start by outlining three major tech trends, and then I'll discuss their impact on society.

Google Info

Free alternative to 411. Nothing to sign up for – you can do it right now. Send a text message to GOOGL (46645). In the body of the message, type *pharmacy chicago* (or whatever; yellow pages or white pages). In 5 seconds, Google texts you back with the closest hits.

Can also find out:

- Weather (type "weather sacramento")
- Stock quotes ("amzn")
- Movie showtimes ("shrek 44120")
- Definitions ("define schadenfreude")
- Driving directions ("miami fl to 60609")
- Unit conversions ("liters in 5 gallons")
- Currency conversions ("25 usd in euros")

Google Info by Voice

Now has a **toll-free voice version**, too: 800-GOOG-411 (business listings only). Say "Pizza, Trenton New Jersey" (or whatever).

"GOOG411. What city and state?"

You: "New York, New York."

Google: "New York, New York. What business name or category?"

You: "Empire State Building."

Google: "Empire State Building! Searching. Top listing: Empire StateBuilding on Fifth Avenue. I'll connect you."

And your call is connected, just as though you'd dialed yourself. Or you can interrupt by saying "Details" (meaning, "read me the phone number and address") or "text message" (meaning, "send that info to my cellphone, so I'll have it in writing").

Chacha

Here's another voice-activated service (800-2CHACHA) -- but this time, you can speak any question at all.

"What's that German word that means, 'pleasure from other people's pain'?" Or "Who ran against Abraham Lincoln for President?" Or "How long has 'Les Misérables' been on Broadway?" Or "What's on the front page of today's New York Times?" Or "How do you jump the battery in a Prius?" Or "Where's the cheapest gas in southeast Connecticut right now?" Or "What's the last flight to New York out of O'Hare airport?"

Just about anything, in fact, that somebody could find on the Web. After 30 seconds, you get a text message confirming that ChaCha is working on your question. A minute or two later, you get the answer, typed out in friendly English ("Thanks for asking!"), as though there were a real person on the other end.

That's because there IS a real person. ChaCha employs thousands of amateur researchers across the U.S. to field your questions, find the answers online, and shoot the answers back to you, complete with a link to the Web page where they found the information. Best of all, there's no fee, no software, no signup or registration; you can pull out your phone and dial it right this instant.

Spinvox, Simulscribe, Callwave

Transcribe your voicemail into text; gets sent to you by email, on the Web, or as text messages.

Awesome because: You can read message transcripts in a fraction of the time you'd spend listening to them. You now have random access to your messages.

You don't have to take notes as you listen, writing down people's names and numbers. Text is searchable, sortable, copyable, pastable, printable, and forwardable. You can check your messages even if you're deaf -- or in the subway or a rock concert.

Spinvox: a service that's sold only to carriers. SimulScribe: available to consumers. Each e-mail message arrives with an audio-file attachment, so you can check the recording against the transcription.

You can leave messages for yourself, dictating e-mail, ideas or whatever, thus turning the service into a virtual secretary. SpinVox can even post transcripts directly to your blog.

All of these will be obsolete when Google Voice becomes available to the public this spring. Offers FREE voicemail transcription.

Popularity Dialer

Awesome way to give yourself an excuse to cut out of a meeting or a bad date. Plug in your phone number and a time, and the system calls you at the appointed moment. You choose what you want to hear on the other end: a boss, a girlfriend, etc. (Note: Pogue has just learned that Popularity Dialer is on hiatus, because someone at the FCC got called by Popularity Dialer who didn't request it!)

Trend #2: Online 24/7

The next generation will take it for granted that the Internet is always available. No more hunting for a coffee shop to check your email!

One big factor: the iPhone, now in the hands of 20 million people.

The iPhone offers plenty of innovation. But its most lasting legacy may be the way that Apple persuaded Cingular to give it carte blanche on designing the phone; Cingular agreed to give up all veto power and accept whatever Apple came up with.

The iPhone's resulting success has led to a new era of innovation, where carriers are more open to innovation, fresh ideas, and the creations of handset makers.

Especially the App Store: 35,000 free or cheap downloadable programs for the iPhone. Like **Showtimes** (movie listings, trailers, reviews – free); **Midomi** (hum a song; it shows you the real recorded version to listen to – free); **Pandora** (Internet radio with thumbs up/thumbs down buttons, tailors the songs it sends you to match your tastes – free); **Urbanspoon** (determines your current location by GPS, proposes nearby restaurants in different cuisines and price ranges – free); **Google Earth** (3-D view of the whole planet – free).

Also **Ocarina** (turns iPhone into a musical instrument; blow into the microphone, finger the “holes” on the screen; listen in to other people playing Ocarina around the world – \$1).

Trend #3: Web 2.0

The old format, Web 1.0, was: We post text, you read it. In Web 2.0, the audience provides the material.

Super-hot, popular examples:

Facebook

Microsoft bought 1.6% of it for \$240 million. That would put the whole value at \$15 *billion!*

LinkedIn.

Same idea – people keeping in touch – but with a business networking slant.

Craigslist

Free classifieds (help wanted, personals, for sale, etc.) in every city. Killing the U.S. newspaper.

Wikipedia

Massive collaborative encyclopedia; anyone can edit.

Digg

Harnesses the wisdom of the masses to find the very best articles on the Web.

Flickr

Post your digital photos. They have billions of searchable photos now.

YouTube

Post your movie and TV clips. Sold to Google after 1 year for \$1.7 billion. Jeez!

Lesser-known examples:

DoMyStuff.Com

You post random tasks you want done; people bid on your jobs.

Prosper.com

Read business plans of small entrepreneurs; make micro-loans at high interest rates (compared to the bank, which is eliminated from the transaction).

Kiva.com

Same idea, but you're making microloans to entrepreneurs in poor countries.

EPetitions.com

Part of the U.K. government Web site. Create petitions on any subject. Non-binding, but lets both the government and the populace see where people's interest lie.

GoLoco.org

A glorified carpooling database. Gets cars off the road, save pollution, save gas, very convenient. Passengers pay the driver a couple bucks.

TripAdvisor.com

Incredible resource. Check out hotels and resorts from the point of view of people who *just* stayed there. Find out details you'd never learn about any other way.

WholsSick.org

Track the bugs that are wafting over your neighborhood. Find out what you've got, so you can manage expectations.

Big Changes

So what does it all mean?

Things splinter

Used to be: TV, books, radio, newspapers. Now there's blogs, RSS feeds, Twitter, Facebook... way too much to keep up on!

Everything's real time

Next generation has no patience for email. It has to be immediate, real time: texting on cellphones; chat rooms; instant messaging; Twitter – real time.

Privacy: none

Next generation doesn't care at all about privacy. Freely advertises relationship status, health issues, money issues, etc. on Facebook and so on.

An ego quotient

"How many friends do you have?" (on Facebook)

"How many followers do you have?" (on Twitter)

A quest for status.

Speed+Ego-Privacy=Twitter

Twitter is a Web site, now exploding in popularity, where you can broadcast very short messages -- 140 characters, max--to anyone who's signed up to receive them. It's like a cross between a blog and a chat room. Your "followers" might include six friends from high school, or, if you're Barack Obama, 254,484 of your most tech-savvy fans. (Incidentally, he hasn't sent out a single Twitter message since taking office. Where are his priorities?)

Meanwhile, you sign up to receive the utterances of OTHER people. Eventually, your screen fills with a scrolling display of their quips -- jokes, recommended links, thoughts for the day, and a lot of "what I'm doing right now" stuff.

At a talk, as a live demo of Twitter, I invited my followers to submit puns. Here are some of the ones that scrolled in after the deadline:

- Puns are like sausage. You want the wurst ones.
- Eskimo out fishing; gets cold, builds fire, sinks and dies. Moral: You can't have your kayak and heat it too.
- Show me where Karl Marx is buried and I'll show you a communist plot.
- I used to work at an orange juice factory; but they canned me because I couldn't concentrate.
- I thought of almost a dozen puns that would tickle your fancy, but alas no pun in ten did.
- I'd rather have a bottle in front of me, than a frontal lobotomy.
- She was only a moonshiner's daughter, but I loved her still.
- 2 TV antenna installers met on a roof and fell in love. The wedding ceremony wasn't so great... but wow, the reception!!
- Couldn't remember how to throw a boomerang, but then it came back to me.
- If its not one thing it's your mother.
- I stood there wondering why a Frisbee gets bigger as it gets closer, then it hit me.
- GM has announced a car called the Amnesia. It's the only car they make that they can't recall.

- Opening a new funeral parlor can be quite an undertaking.
- I've been reading Stephen Hawking's latest book about anti-gravity. □ I just can't put it down.
- I heard a guy had his whole left side amputated in an accident. But he's going to be all right.
- What does a dyslexic agnostic with insomnia do? Lies awake at night wondering whether or not there really is a dog.
- When I asked if I could get insurance if the nearby volcano erupted, they assured me I would be covered.
- Two parrots sat on a perch. After a moment, one said to the other, "Do you smell fish?"
- This just in: A hole has been found in the nudist-camp wall. The police are looking into it.
- A vulture boards an plane, carrying two dead raccoons. The flight attendant says, "Sorry, sir, only 1 carrion allowed per passenger."
- I just got rid of my waterbed because my girlfriend and I were drifting apart.
- When chemists die, we barium.
- A great pun is its own reword.

The rise of the citizen reviewer

They review *everything* online – rely on the wisdom of the masses, rather than a single newspaper critic:

- Local restaurants: **yelp.com**
- Movies: **imdb.com**
- Local contractors: **angieslist.com**
- Electronics: **cnet.com**
- Doctors: **rateMDs.com** (and many others)
- Cars: **Edmunds.com**

- ...plus RateMyBoyfriend.com, RateMyButt.com, and everything else under the sun!

On-Demand Everything

Next generation expects, and will get, on-demand TV, movies, audio. If it doesn't have Play, Pause, Rewind and FF buttons, it's no good.

Challenges

Blog attacks

The anonymity makes it possible for people (enemies, short sellers, etc.) to attack without being able to be traced.

But: don't have ethics guidelines, editors, second opinions, etc.

Copyright

Some companies sue; some companies negotiate a payment. (Besides – do we actually agree on what copyright infringement *is*? Pogue's famous Audience Quiz.)

Teaching Privacy, Permanence, Credibility

Many examples of public figures brought down (Florida Rep. Mark Foley; MSNBC's Keith Olbermann) because what they thought were private emails or chat sessions became public.

Even David Pogue failed to check that "what the home computer will look like in 50 years" photo against **Snopes.com**, the Internet's central clearinghouse for Internet rumors. It debunks (or confirms) just about anything that gets sent around by email. There, he would have learned that that "future computer" photo was a Photoshop fake.

Parting Advice

Nobody's got the time to track all of this stuff. Lots of it is overhyped. All of it consumes time and money to participate in. Nobody expects you to adopt them all. Still: assess them, use the channels that work for you, and keep your eyes open to the possibilities!