



Dreaming of Future Communication Technology

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPLP

Smart phones are ubiquitous these days. If you walk around any campus, you will be hard pressed to find a single student who is not using one. Most of them are texting or chatting while they walk, drive, eat, go to the bathroom, and I suppose, make love. I have no idea where this trend is going to lead our society, but it is interesting to speculate. As students graduate and move into the workforce, it is going to mean interesting shifts in technology used on the job.

Generation Y, also called the millennial generation, is the fastest growing demographic in the workforce and will make up 75% of the working population by 2025. The next generation is going to be digital almost from birth, as over 80% of individuals born today have some form of digital footprint by the time they reach age 2.

What really astounds me is that the millennial generation is moving away from voice communication in the direction of more texting. I thought we would be relying less and less on the juxtaposition of letters typed in from a keyboard layout that was invented by Christopher Sholes over 150 years ago. Imagine, as I am typing this article, I am placing one letter next to another with occasional spaces in order to form words. The words combine into sentences, and that is how we get meaning.

Inevitably, we will move away from letters and use images and audio, or just thoughts, to communicate ideas. It will be a huge relief not to have a keyboard anymore. There are already many voice recognition programs that allow one to speak and get the message typed out, but that is embryonic because it ultimately still involves the juxtaposition of letters. With the proliferation of visual devices, there will be more images and fewer letters in the future. The devices will not

have to be held in one's own hand, and kids will not have over-developed thumb muscles.

Imagine the logical progression where the information is projected into the inside surface of one's glasses so there is no need to hold a device at all. It could be semi-transparent so the user could see where he or she is going but still "chat" with others. Computer-screen glasses are already available from Google Glass and thought to be only a few years from the mass market.

Eventually there would be no need to text or type anything because a chip in the temples of the glasses would interface with brain waves so the tiny micro computer could know and transmit what a person is thinking, but only if the person wants to have that information go out. Imagine the fun hackers would have with that feature!

There would be no battery as we know it required to power the device. It would be powered by solar batteries or in cloudy areas by tiny nano-turbine generators powered by alcohol. To recharge the device, you would simply put a single drop of alcohol in a port every 3-4 days, and you would never run out of "juice."

Improved technology will ultimately lead to a kind of "wordless" communication where thoughts are coupled directly into one person's brain from another person's brain. That trend would eliminate the need for any kind of screen. Where images are wanted, the molecules in the air a short distance in front of a person could be made to vibrate in such a way as to form a 3-dimension color image, sort of like a hologram. Each person could decide whether he or she wanted others to be allowed to view the image or if it was for private viewing only. That decision would be communicated by "thinking" the distribution.

These dreams may seem unrealistic, but the convergence of video technology and nano-technology is enabling many devices that already approximate the pieces of the system I have described here. I do not think it will take more than about a decade to put all the pieces together into an actual system. For example, we already have technology that allows individuals who have severed limbs to "think" a prosthesis to move, and it does. Nano-generators are already invented and are being used in devices today.

The future of communication is going to be a wild ride; even with the most recent gadgets, we are really in the "cave man" phase of what is possible. Stay tuned and be flexible!

The
TRUST
Ambassador

Bob Whipple is CEO of Leadergrow, Inc. an organization dedicated to growing leaders. He can be reached at bwhipple@leadergrow.com 585-392-7763. Website www.leadergrow.com BLOG www.thetrustambassador.com He is author of the following books: *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, and *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*