

# A New Era of Digital Empowerment

**W**e live in a world that is constantly re-inventing itself. The mobile industry landscape is changing with the entrance of new stakeholders and dominance changing hands across the value web. It is said that Content (rather Context) is the King! Those enabling it are the Queen, but the Customer and eventually end-user/consumer is the real 'King Kong' - the ultimate stakeholder (at the centre of the value web). We are witnessing a new era of digital empowerment like never before in a truly connected world. Our personal/social life is on Facebook, our professional life (CV) on LinkedIn, our views

on Twitter and blogs. There is a mass transformation that our society is undergoing.

The 'Big data' revolution is leading to a digital fatigue and clutter of information which can be overwhelming, but it also represents a huge opportunity. There is a strong need to incorporate 'Simplicity' which is the need for simplicity in an increasingly complex world (ref:<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simplicity>). Micro-segmentation is crucial to bring relevance with hyper local and hyper context as prime themes, bringing meaningful solutions to the user.

The mobile device itself has transformed from a mere communication device (the handset) to an integrated lifestyle phenomena with convergence (and also divergence to some extent) coming out of the box. One may forget their wallet, keys or watch but doing without a mobile phone is getting impossible! The smartphone of today has been strongly influenced from adjacent and converging industries. The mobile device with the right services (as a holistic solution) has greatly enriched lives and renewed the 'digital divide' to 'digital dividend/ opportunities.'

The 3C convergence phenomena has seen Communications, Computing and Consumer Electronics integrating and fuzzifying the boundaries of what we call a computer or a mobile phone - smartphones/converged devices are bringing a paradigm shift in our industry. Multimedia Convergence with new forms such as video can break across language barriers, bring a high emotional connect value and reduce the carbon footprint, directly impacting the environment. We are witnessing not just teenagers who have become heavy 'screenagers' but many new demographic segments taking on multi-screen convergence by storm. The re-invention of tablets specially the iPad, has created a whole new category. It is truly a breakthrough consumption device, as are other new transformational smart devices and morphed new categories, such as 'Phablets'.

Half of the world-wide broadband connections (currently at 1.8 billion) and half of the 1 billion smartphones sold in this year will come from emerging markets. With affordability accompanying accessibility, these come at

an attractive TCO (Total Cost of Ownership) for the masses. Mobile apps have been amongst the most powerful innovations our industry has seen in recent times. Although, there is a clutter of apps across multiple OSes and app stores, we see several positive moves to provide meaningful and productive apps. The 'Appcessories' trend (new-age Apps enabled/bundled with accessories) is also catching on like wildfire.

We are seeing that ICT enabling domains such as M-Education, M-Health, M-Inclusion, M-Governance are truly transforming economies, with major traction being visible at BOP/MOP (Base and Middle of the Pyramid). From empowering farmers, WSHGs (Women Self Help Groups), under-privileged communities, students in remote areas, the 'aam-admi' (common man) will truly be revamped into an 'e/m-nagrik' (digitally connected citizen).

This presents an excellent opportunity for emerging markets to grow rapidly, applying highly innovative technologies for mass use ranging from 3D, AR/VR (Augmented and Virtual Reality), gesture recognition (as a Natural User Interface), brain/mind-sensors using EEG (Electroencephalography) to multi-touch surface collaborative smart devices. M2M (Machine-to-Machine) or IOT (Internet of Things), as it is commonly called, will be a mega-trend in bringing a new meaning to communications and connecting people and things to one another. We already see home automation, connected vehicles, smart cities and inter-networked objects bringing a revolution from active control, monitoring/surveillance to managing lives on various dimensions. This is bringing new perspectives to life, building us precious equity in time, efficiency and subsequently productivity.

Ultimately all that matters is not the technology but the benefits, its impact and how delightful is the end-user experience. It is about touching hearts, creating that big 'wow' and increasing the happiness quotient. ■

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