

GUEST EDITORIAL BY SHELLY PALMER

How soon will TV transform from wall-mounted 4K flat-screens to a 99-cent app in a VR/AR App Store?

That's a question few will ponder this week as the National Association of Broadcasters gathers in Las Vegas for the NAB Show 2016. TV has both defined and enlarged mass communication for more than a half-century. No one in their right mind would suggest that big-screen TVs might go away – ever!



Well, no one ever said I was in my right mind. I'm not "liquored up" on the scatter market, and TV sales in an election year/Olympic year are cyclical. Yes, people are making real money right now and the TV business (from an advertiser sales perspective) is doing great. But a few technological breakthroughs have caught my attention in the past few weeks, and they're worth a discussion.

VR and AR at F8

VR (Virtual Reality) is for gamers, education, sports and adult entertainment (which has led the transformation of video technology as far back as anyone can remember). AR (Augmented Reality), a different technology which some say is more difficult to work with, is for navigating and augmenting experiences in the real world. Last week at F8, the Facebook team told us

It's Not TV, It's a TV App

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what we already knew: big headsets will evolve into a pair of glasses as soon as technologically possible. The question is, when?

AI and Machine Learning

AlphaGo recently beat 9-dan Go Master Lee Sedol 4 games to 1, demonstrating a system of Deep Learning and Reinforcement Learning algorithms that should have gotten everyone's attention. Computers that can pattern match at or near human capabilities (or closely enough to do the jobs we are asking them to do) are a gigantic stepping-stone toward the seamless Natural Language Processing (NLP), Image Recognition and spatial navigation required to make VR and AR awesome. These fields of data-scientific research are progressing at an exponential rate. Computers are going to have capabilities required to bring us very believable virtual and augmented worlds. The question is, when?

We Talk to Things and They Talk Back

Amazon Echo, Siri, OK Google, Cortana, my car and a bunch of other "things" in my life now understand me and are in training to talk back in useful ways. "Alexa temperature" is an easy one. "Alexa, what's my schedule for tomorrow?" It responds by reading my calendar. "Alexa, remind me about lunch 15 minutes in advance." I don't need to tell it why I want to be reminded – it doesn't care; it just does what it's told. "Alexa, play Mozart." If you're a prime member, try it. It's super fun. Talking to things, which is facilitated by advanced AI and Machine Learning tools, is an important step toward TV as an app. You won't have to type your searches; you'll just say what you want. The question is, when?

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