

TECHNOTRENDS[®]

Newsletter

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New Tools For Advertising (Part 2) By Daniel Burrus

In my book *Technotrends: How To Use Technology To Go Beyond Your Competition*, I suggested that companies work hard to become Information Age companies, and in the years ahead, technology would allow them to enter the Communication Age. Those that saw the opportunity and made the transition would reap huge rewards. Why is shifting from the Information Age to the Communication Age important? The reason can be found by answering a simple question. Is there a difference between informing and communicating? The answer is clearly yes! Informing is one-way, static and often fails to cause action. Communicating is two-way, dynamic and usually causes action. Today, technologies like the Web provide the perfect vehicle for interactivity at any time, in any place, and with any person. Unfortunately, the vast majority of companies use the Web primarily as a tool for informing.

Ask yourself: Does my organization spend more time informing employees than it does communicating with them? Do we inform customers more than we communicate with them? Is our advertising focused on informing and not on communicating?

Advertisers Want Action

All advertisers want their ads to lead consumers to take action! Buy! In the past, getting people who actually viewed or read the ads to take action by purchasing the product, was hit-or-miss because consumers had access to a limited number of television stations (the major networks), a few local radio stations, read one daily newspaper, and subscribed to only a few magazines. The majority of people were not distracted with surfing the Web, playing video games on-line with people from all over the planet, receiving instant messages on their laptop while writing a report, and talking on their cell phone for hours each day.

Simultaneous Media Use

In addition, consumers are increasingly using more than one form of media at the same time. For example, you might be reading a magazine while you occasionally glance up to see an interesting portion of a cable television show, while listening to your iPod play in the background. And, to top it all off, the vast majority of advertisers are still using static ads focused on informing, causing a low percentage of consumers to take action. Today, advertisers know the harsh reality: running an ad on a major television network will no longer guarantee that the majority of consumers will see the ad. Advertisers must now have an integrated strategy that combines multiple forms of media to match the new media habits of the targeted audience. The old advertising model is broken, but what is the new model? What are the new tools and strategies advertisers can use to get the word out? That's the subject of next month's issue.

TECHNOLOGY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

SURFING THE 'NET WITH YOUR VOICE

Israeli engineers have become the first to combine voice recognition and text-to-speech technology to develop a totally voice-activated system for surfing the Web. Aimed at the growing number of people who want to make their

driving time more productive, the developers are looking at integrating the system directly into automobiles to provide full access to the Internet from behind the wheel. Maestro, as the system is called, allows users to ask questions verbally and hear the answers, minimizing the danger of being distracted while driving. Users can also select the search engine to be used and the number of results to be returned, as well as voice settings, including volume and pitch.

For information: Dr. Meirav Taieb-Maimon, Department of Information Systems Engineering, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, P. O. Box 653, Beer Sheva, 84105, Israel; Web site: www.bgu.ac.il

WIRELESS HOMES

The goal of a new wireless networking standard, which is being jointly developed by more than 160 electronics and appliance manufacturers, is to make building automation practical. Called ZigBee™, the new technology could cut building costs drastically by making it possible to install devices, like light switches, simply by sticking them on a wall. An embedded chip allows them to link up wirelessly with the appropriate fixtures and eliminate the need for costly wiring. The standard utilizes a technology called “mesh networking” in which each device can relay information to and through neighboring devices. Such a system is more robust than traditional “hub and spoke” networks because if one node goes down, the others can reroute around it. And unlike Bluetooth networks, which are limited to eight devices, ZigBee systems could link up to 64,000 different electrical components. The first systems that will likely incorporate the ZigBee adaptors are appliances, lamps, audio/video equipment and the like. They can then be operated by wireless wall-mounted switches or even remote controls.

For information: ZigBee™ Alliance, phone: 925-275-6607; fax: 925-886-3850; email: help@zigbee.org; Web site: www.zigbee.org

“SMART” BUILDINGS CLEAN THE AIR

A consortium of Swedish and Finnish construction companies is looking at ways to keep the environment cleaner. One solution they’ve come up with is to use smart building materials that dissolve pollutants when exposed to the sun and wash the broken-down particles away when it rains. The material could also be used to keep bacteria and dirt from sticking to surfaces in hospitals and doctors offices. For this idea, concrete products were coated with a microscopic layer of titanium dioxide, which is highly reactive when exposed to ultraviolet light. This interaction triggers a catalytic process that breaks down by-products of fossil fuels, such as nitrogen oxides, and other toxic substances. One of the first applications is expected to be construction of road tunnel walls that destroy vehicle exhaust. The self-cleaning concrete can also be used for buildings and sidewalks to keep pollution down.

For information: Skanska, Sjoviksbacken 8, SE - 117 43 - Stockholm, Sweden; phone: +46-8-744-1320; fax: +46-8-744-1328; Web site: www.skanska.se

DESIGNING DNA

Synthesizing specialized DNA molecules holds promise for many areas of science, from designing more effective drugs and developing hardier crops to reducing pollution and generating energy. But current methods for creating even a single molecule are labor intensive, time-consuming, and extremely costly. Recently, a handful of researchers developed a technology for engineering cells and proteins faster and at a lower cost than ever before. Their

technique streamlines the process, reducing the number of steps and reagents required, and enabling more automation. Instead of engineering one long molecule, they use a gene chip on which they can build thousands of tinier fragments. These can then be spliced together using the company's proprietary software. The process also reduces the error rate to between one one-thousandth and one ten-thousandth that of current processes.

For information: Samir Kaul, Codon Devices, One Kendall Sq., Bldg. 700, Ground Floor, Cambridge, MA 02139; phone: 617-218-1618; Web site: www.codondevices.com

NEW TWIST IN ONLINE BORROWING

Borrowers in Britain no longer need to limit their choice of lenders to large financial institutions. Thanks to Zopa™, an eBay-style Web site, they can bypass typical banks and borrow directly from individuals. In this peer-to-peer environment, lenders "advertise" how much money they are prepared to lend and at what rate. Borrowers can "shop around" for the best rates, and Zopa pulls the deal together and manages the collection of payments. Zopa minimizes the risk by dividing up the lenders' cash among at least 50 customers; it takes a one percent commission on each loan transaction. Since March, more than 23,000 individuals have signed on for the service.

For information: Zopa, Ltd., Third Floor, 35-38 Mortimer Street, London, W1W 7RG, United Kingdom; Web site: www.zopa.com

"WRISTWATCH" MONITORS VITAL SIGNS

Israeli engineers are planning to release a new medical monitor in 2006 that not only continuously measures a patient's pulse rate, cardiac rhythm and blood oxygen levels, but it automatically transmits the information to medical professionals in the event of an emergency. Best of all, it can be worn on the wrist and needs no electrodes or wires. The MDKeeper contains a built-in cellular speakerphone and can either store data for later transmission or send it automatically in real time.

For information: Qfer Atzmon; Tadiran Spectralink, Ltd., 29, Hamerkava Street, P. O. Box 150, Holon 58101, Israel; email: info@tadspec.com; Web site: www.tadspec.com

CULTURE-SPECIFIC MOBILE PHONE

The market for mobile phones in the Middle East is expected to top 110 million by 2008, and at least one company is prepared to meet the challenge with the Ilkone i800. In addition to standard cell phone features, the Ilkone i800 helps Muslim users by providing easy access to important spiritual resources and information. For example, the qibla finder can point out the direction of Mecca from over 5,000 locations for daily prayer. It contains the text of the Koran in Arabic as well as English, and is equipped with Arabic keys for text messaging. Future planned enhancements include a camera and a checklist for pilgrims on their journey to Mecca.

For information: SAMCOM Electronics, U.A.E., Dubai; phone: +971-4-2629466; fax: +971-4-262-9477; Web site: www.ilkonetel.com

GROW YOUR OWN BONE GRAFTS

Scientists at Vanderbilt University have discovered a new way to generate bone material for repairing serious breaks. Rather than removing pieces of bone from the patient's hip or rib — a painful process that can produce serious complications — they have demonstrated that it's possible to grow new bone tissue within a patient's own body and then use it to repair the damaged area. Working on rabbits, they created a space by injecting saline between a bone

and its thin outer layer called the periosteum. Stem cells, which line the inner surface of the periosteum, were then coaxed into producing bone with injections of a calcium-rich gel. In about two weeks, soft, immature bone tissue appeared, and in six to eight weeks it was hard enough to graft onto an injured site. The researchers also hope to test the technique with the liver and pancreas, both of which have similar outer layers.

For information: Venkatram P. Shastri, Assistant Professor, Biomedical Engineering, Vanderbilt University, 5821 Science and Engineering Building, Box 1631 Station B, 1225 Stevenson Center, Nashville, TN 37232; phone: 615-322-8005; fax: 615-343-7919; email: prasad.shastri@vanderbilt.edu; Web site: www.bme.vanderbilt.edu/research_shastri.html

COLOR YOUR WORLD

A new technology called ColorPeak is destined to dramatically improve the quality of plasma, LCD and projection TV displays. Traditional television pictures are made up of tiny red, green and blue dots that combine to give the perception of over 16 million individual shades of color. The new Color Peak adds three additional colors to the mix to produce three trillion possible combinations — representing 95% of the visible color spectrum. The result is richer, brighter color. The new technology should become commercially available within the next few years.

For information: Genoa Color Technologies, Ltd., 10 Hasadnaot Street, Herzlia Pituach, 46728, Israel; phone: +972-9-950-9970; fax: +972-9-951-5970; email: info@genoacolor.com; Web site: www.genoacolor.com

NAVIGATION SOFTWARE FOR YOUR CELL PHONE

Planning a hiking or backpacking adventure into the great outdoors? If you have a Nextel cell phone with a GPS receiver, you can turn your phone into a personal guide. The Adventure Planner software and Web site allow you to download topographic, aerial, and street maps for more than 3,000 hiking, rafting, and mountain biking routes. Then, when you're on the trail — even if you're out of cell phone range — you can display your location, direction, altitude and speed, and even share your adventures with family and friends. Similar software packages for Europe and Asia are planned for release next year.

For information: Trimble Navigation, Ltd., 749 N. Mary Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94085; phone: 408-481-8000; Web site: www.trimbleoutdoors.com

SHED POUNDS, QUIT SMOKING, & IMPROVE CHOLESTEROL WITH 1 PILL

A new drug, now in the final phase of clinical testing, may not only help you lose weight, but stop smoking and manage your cholesterol in the process. Called Rimonabant, this new approach to weight loss was based on the fact that marijuana smokers experience extreme hunger (the “munchies”). Working on the premise that the cannaboids stimulate appetite, the researchers decided to investigate whether blocking cannaboid receptors in the brain might suppress appetite. In clinical tests, 50 percent of subjects lost an average of 20 pounds and kept it off for at least one year. It was also discovered that the same dosage doubled the odds of quitting smoking and increased good cholesterol (HDL) levels. Rimonabant is expected to hit the prescription market as early as 2006.

For information: Sanofi Aventis, 174, av. de France, 75013 Paris, France; phone: +33-1-53 77 40 00; Web site: www.sanofi-aventis.com