

Things to Come ...

September 2014

Overall Analysis

- I expect the next year to be dominated by incremental, rather than radical changes to technology.

Smartphones

- Yesterday, Apple announced two new phones: iPhone 6 (4.7" display) and iPhone 6 Plus (5.5 inch display).
 - The phones now support near-field communications (NFC) and a new e-commerce "standard" known as Apple Pay.
 - They will be introduced alongside the new version of the iPhone and iPad operating system, iOS 8.
 - iOS 8 supports numerous health-related apps.
 - Apple claims the new phones to be 25% faster than the iPhone 5 family of smartphones.
 - However, the new iPhones do not sport the anticipated sapphire display (yet)
- More smartphones will be released with a curved shape.
 - Several manufacturers already produce curved phone, with curved glass and display.
 - The manufacturers claim that the curved shape makes the phones easier to hold and use.
- Expect more and more phone manufacturers to incorporate electronic payment capabilities.
 - This is likely to lead to a fragmentation of such "standards" in the same manner as VHS vs. Betamax and Blu-ray vs. HD-DVD.

Wearable Computers

- Apple finally released its long-awaited digital watch, known as Apple Watch.
 - One's watch can communicate with one's iPhone.
 - Its crystal is synthetic sapphire.
 - The display is highly-customizable.
 - It has its own set of apps, and 3rd party apps will be on the way.
 - It utilizes inductive charging of batteries.
 - The body comes in 18kt gold, stainless steel, and aluminum.
- The Apple Watch joins similar products by Samsung and other smartphone manufacturers.
 - These have the ability to monitor your heart rate and other physical characteristics.

Tablet Computers

- Expect fast processors and better displays from all tablet manufacturers.
- Some tablet rumors:
 - Apple will release a 12.9" iPad during the first quarter of 2015; compare this to the 9.8" display of the current iPad.
 - Samsung is working on a "foldable tablet" for release during 2015. It would have a "tri-fold" design in which screen wings fold in from both the left and the right sides and meet in the middle.

Televisions

- Given the poor reception of 3D TV, television manufacturers are looking for the "next big thing".
 - Last year, they hoped that "Internet-enabled TV" would entice buyers to ditch their flatscreen TVs in favor of newer models.
 - However, the availability of reasonably-priced TV-side boxes providing the same capabilities – such as Roku, Apple TV, and Google Chromecast – put a dent in the sales of such new televisions.

- Television features to watch for this year:
 - Curved screens
 - “4K” or “Ultra-HD” screens (4000 x 2000 resolution).
 - Lower price for OLED television screens.
- Just around the corner ...
 - Interactive TV
 - Wi-Di

Computers

- Desktop dominance will continue to dwindle.
- Laptops may become the prevalent computing platform, sitting between desktops and tablets.
- Dell has released a “5K” display (5120 x 2880), 27” monitors.
 - Save your pennies, though, as they cost \$2,500.
- Just as curved TVs will become more widely available, so will curved computer monitors.
- Solid-state drives (SSDs) have improved in both reliability and capacity, and their prices continue to plummet.
 - This time last year, prices were more than \$1 per gigabyte. By early 2014, the price per gigabyte had dropped under \$1.
 - Now, one can find prices under \$0.50 per gigabyte.
- SSDs as main system drives can speed up file load times by a factor of 10x or more.
- Mac Users: Watch for OS X *Yosemite* within a few weeks.
 - Like the current version of OS X, *Mavericks*, experts expect this to be a free (i.e., no cost) operating system upgrade.
- PC Users: Watch for the preview (a.k.a, “beta”) of Windows 9 within the next few weeks.
 - Windows 8 and 8.1 was largely rejected by the PC user community, both business and personal.
 - Microsoft has been interviewing users in an attempt to find what they want in the next version of Windows.
 - Many experts expect Microsoft to release Windows 9 for free, to compete with Apple’s Yosemite operating system.
 - Expect the production release in early 2015.

- The name of the game for new computer processors this year will be:
 - Lower power consumption
 - Modest speed/computing improvements
- A blessing this year: reversible USB plugs.