

## **The Future of Relationships.**

The past developments of communication technology have been revolutionary in transforming the world of business and commerce. This impacted also onto the individual, giving people access to one another and to business' on the web. The means of communication have recently come to include wireless Internet, such as WAP technology. And even the development of **mobile phones** has greatly increased since the late 1990's. Mobile phones first became available in the early 1980's. They were not very popular at first, probably due to their large size.

These developments led to people being able to communicate with one another much more easy and made society in general become more accessible.

The development of mobile phones has meant that people can now express their thoughts on the move, where as before this may not have been as possible and conversations put off until two or more people are at landline telephones, which could often be some time.

The third largest network, Orange, topped the network table with 1.4m new customers added in the three months between September and December to take its total customer base to more than 5m.

The UK's largest mobile phone provider Vodafone saw 1.075m new customers subscribe to its network, bringing its total customer base in the UK to 8m.

The second-largest network BT Cellnet reported an increase of 1.001m new customers. Its customer base now totals 7m.

And One2One, the smallest mobile network, added 900,000 new users in that period, taking its total customer base to 4m.

The total number of mobile phones in Britain - 24m - now exceeds the number of separate households. About 40% of the population now owns a mobile phone'. (Taken from the BBC's website).

The development of mobile phones led to a society that has become dependant on them. Many people nowadays cannot imagine not having a mobile accessible, and the people who do not own mobile phones are quickly becoming the minority. This new technology has forced people to become machine literate. Many people who do not know how to operate a computer will still be able to operate a mobile phone. A development that has also now been incorporated into mobile phones is that of the mobile Internet. WAP or 'Wireless Application Protocol' is quickly advancing and become common as a feature of mobile phones. Individuals can now access the Internet from the street, on the bus or even in a restaurant. This means that people are able to send emails and communicate more effectively to one another.

How will this affect our behaviour and the way we act towards one another? Will this make it harder for a person to start a conversation with someone else in reality? Perhaps it will make it easier, people being able to interact as if online. Perhaps the way in which we perceive our reality is changing due to this technology also. For example, in the future we may see two entirely separate realities. One that is physical, and another that is simply a virtual world. The virtual world of course would be made possible through the use of the Internet and other technology. Possibly the introduction of future technology's could play a factor in how this

reality is displayed. The idea of virtual villages appearing on the Internet is now also quickly becoming a possibility, with more and more subscribers joining all the time. The way in which we associate the word 'community' is now changing. Nowadays people refer to the 'global community' and to 'internet communities'. What this shows us is that through the use of modern technology we are able to form entire collections of people. And it is currently possible to be part of a community that spans the entire globe, as opposed to the old meaning of 'community', which suggests simply the people that live around you.

But what do all of these ideas and developments mean to society. Or more importantly, how will it change society? One of the ways to start answering this question could be to look at how it has impacted on us so far.

For example, the use of mobile phones; People are now communicating more than they normally would. A new language that we use in text messages has been created, the language is just words shortened down as to speed up communication. This includes sentences that may read 'I will call you'.

This is another issue, the speed at which we are communicating is increasing become faster. However we still desire a way in which instant access to other people is possible.

People are becoming more dependent on this technology and many of us now take it for granted. I for instance, would have to be writing this essay on paper with a pen for example without the current technological advances that are available.

Our relationships with one another are now finding technology as a medium between the two. If we want to communicate with one another more and more often it will be via the use of technology. Even the basic telephone connects two or more people together in a conversation. What is happening now is that we are finding better and faster ways of making such communication possible.

Relationships have become stronger in my opinion because of these advances. I think that this is true because I believe that people who are able to make contact more easily with one another do, and I feel that because of this they will. This has been shown by the increased use of mobile phones. Whether it be through actual speaking or through the use of text-messaging people are still generally making more contact with each other.

This could mean that relationship problems are dealt with quicker than would be if only telephones existed. But not only are problems dealt with faster, but also easier. People are able to express themselves differently in text form than in conversation. For example how people can often be more honest whilst writing a letter to someone than if talking to them face to face on a telephone.

An example of a future technology changing the way we communicate with one another or influence our relationships in a certain way could be the development of technology allowing communication to be easier. Such as being able to possess a communication device that is in-built into our clothes. This could mean that we would be more likely to buy clothes of a better quality. This could be so that the clothes don't rip or snare easily. People wouldn't want this to happen because they would know how important the communication devices are inside. This could mean that

people would be able to communicate even faster and with the true meaning of hands free. This could affect the way that people think of using technology. Instead of seeing communicating as making use of a device people could see communicating over long distances as another day to day routine. It would also mean that communication would again be made even easier and that people would be in 24 hour reach. There may be devices that inbuilt into clothes that charge themselves on the kinetic energy given off by our movement, such as the kinetically charged wristwatches that are readily available now.

The technology that has been developed already has helped to solve many of our arguments; it has provided access to each other.

Of course this raises the question do we need to have our relationship problems solved easier? Do we need to be able to be happy with one another all the time? We all strive to be happy, we do this through various ways, and one of these ways includes interacting with one another. If problems then arise from this interaction, a person would, normally, want to solve these problems and carry on being happy and have people that they can relate to.

It may be argued that people should not be able to sort problems with one another out through the use of technology, and that the best, and perhaps only right way of solving any of our problems with one another is to do things face to face. We should not lack the advantage of being able to read a person's body language, which isn't available through any of today's technological communicational means. If we were to carry on solving our problems easily we may develop other problems, perhaps problems with one's self. For example insecurity may become an issue with someone who always chooses to communicate via technology.

Another point raised by the future of relationships is the communication we will do with machines. How would we be able to interact to different computers and how will this affect us?

Well Great Britain is quickly joining the USA owning computers with modems. This would indicate that the majority of people in Britain are starting to use the Internet. People are starting to use communication technology everyday in their lives. The ways that people interact is fast becoming the common thing.

## **Mobile Phones Must Die**

To assume that cell phones will be the foundation for the mobile Internet will likely lead people down the Minitel path of doomed investments and missed opportunities with real innovations.

**Telephones are ill suited for mobile Internet access** for many reasons:

- The distance between the human ear and mouth dictates their brick-like form factor. Design for data-rich interaction is better achieved with a less elongated form factor.
- The keypad dominates too much of the surface area. An Internet device should allocate close to 100% of its surface area to the screen to maximize the amount of information and user interface it can show.

- A numeric keypad will always be a poor device for entering anything except phone numbers.
- Multi-modal designs that integrate visual display with audio and/or voice commands are awkward because they force users to transfer the handset between the ear and a viewable location. Even the current primitive touch-tone services are painful to use on a mobile phone.

Fortunately, there are alternatives. Several use a **deck-of-cards form factor**, including the Palm Pilot, the PocketPC, or the Blackberry. Of the three, the PocketPC may win because it allocates the biggest percentage of its area to viewable screen real estate. At the same time, the Blackberry's QWERTY keyboard is surprisingly pleasant to use compared with the poor handwriting recognition we are currently offered. Of course, future devices will likely have better handwriting recognition, and pen input will likely solve many mobile-device problems, since the pen can also be used to directly manipulate on-screen interface widgets. How to handle voice calls? Use an earplug with a dangling microphone. Many cell phone users already employ this style of hands-free calling.