

**"All innovation is about doing things differently - improving people's lives"**

[youtube:http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjWgsIVATuo auto]Futurist keynote on Innovation

Telecom companies become media houses. Food retailers become banks. Computers become phones and video stores. While we will see convergence in products and services on price, features and quality, we will also see huge new investment in diversity.

Everyone is talking about convergence, yet few corporations fully understand the real threats and opportunities.

Convergence will transform every aspect of technology business together with communications, media, music, film, TV and other entertainment. Telecom companies become software and media houses. Food retailers become online banks. Computers become phones and video stores, while phones become TVs, and cameras become e-mail devices.

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Convergence can be boring, destroys variety, breeds monopoly, kills invention, adds unwanted options, makes life more complicated - and robs consumers of choice.

Convergence is about co-packaging, but all real innovation is about diversity: doing things different to serve clients better. Many companies are trying hard to sell single multi-tasking, convergent (expensive) devices to solve all problems. Take the so-called digital home: convergence might mean total control with wireless TV / video / music / web in every room, all from one smartphone - or a fridge that is also a web browser. But who really wants web access on a fridge door, or a single remote control for every device in the house, or a single device to play the same music in every room?

Both convergence and divergence are happening at the same time. We need to keep focussed on the needs of ordinary people who want many simple, well-designed, reliable, low cost products - to do different things. We need to encourage diversity, innovation and creative genius, to improve quality of life, solve real problems and make great things happen. Convergence in technology products is important but divergence will drive the future, and survival of every technology company will depend on it.

At the same time, expect confusion in many software, telecom and media companies about their identity, caused by rapid convergence in their consumer offerings, leading to loss of focus when it comes to vision, confusion about strategy, and erratic decision-making.

The winners in the convergence battles will be visionary companies who are able to think rapidly outside their own industry box, embrace radical new partnerships, integrate their processes, and create new products or services that meet real needs.

"Take hold of the future or the future will take hold of you. "

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