

A Look at the Last Decade in Tech

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Wow. 2010...it's hard to believe! If you would have asked someone 50 years ago, what it would be like in the 21st century, they might have said we would all be driving around in flying cars or communicating with our wristwatch picture phones.

We have come along way, and this last decade is no exception. So when reflecting back on the last ten years of technology, I wasn't surprised at all that there was so much that I could talk about.

The year 2000 brought with it a new millennium, the Y2K bug – which never fully materialized, and the end of the Dot-com boom. Amazon.com was already the most successful online retailer, and Google was still a fledgling start-up company – not a verb!

This decade has seen the creation of the iPod, iPhone, Blackberry and other smartphones, HDTVs, and next-gen video game systems like Xbox 360, PS3 and the Nintendo Wii. Blu-ray beat HD-DVD, ebooks finally began to catch on, and Netbooks became one of the most popular computers in years.

As an “early adopter” I tend to jump in to new technologies as they come out. I picked up the iPhone when it hit Canada – and can't live without it. I own all three video-game consoles, which I use not only for gaming and movie/music streaming, but with my new Wii I can also get fit!

I was rooting for HD-DVD during the high definition video war (it was cheaper and more advanced) because I already had the add-on unit for my Xbox 360, but I am ok with Blu-ray winning the war. It still appears that DVD is king, however.

When you are an early adopter, you sometimes get burned because it is inevitable that technology will become cheaper, faster and better. But even though my \$2,500 HDTV now costs \$700 to buy, I have enjoyed every minute of it over the last 4 years.

Getting back to innovative tech, digital music was revolutionized when Apple launched the iPod in 2001, and then iTunes in 2003 – now the most successful digital music marketplace in the world, with almost 10 billion songs downloaded.

Apple did it again with the iPhone – a smartphone that puts email, Internet, music, video/movies, games and over 130,000 apps in your pocket. It is now the number two smartphone in the world, behind RIM's Blackberry, which had a

significant headstart. Over three billion apps have been downloaded since the App Store was launched in 2008.

Apple is expected to announce a new “tablet” computer in January 2010 – could tablet computing (which has been around for at least 10 years) finally be the next big thing?

From its early beginnings in the first half of the 1990’s, the Web really came into its own in the last decade. Websites went from being cheesy-looking experiments, to truly attractive, engaging, and interactive mediums. The concept of Web 2.0 has taken this even further with web-based communities and social networking sites, video-sharing sites like YouTube, blogs, wikis and other online technologies.

Social networking exploded in the last five years, first with the popularity of MySpace -- perhaps the first successful mainstream social networking site, followed by the current king, Facebook. I personally use Facebook to keep up with my friends and share a little bit of my life.

Blogging became a hit as millions of people took to the web to express themselves, provide professional advice and information, or just voice their opinions about everyday stuff. There are now hundreds of millions of blogs on the Internet. I too have a blog – mostly for posting articles I write such as the one you are reading, but I hope to do more with it in the future. You can check it out at www.digitaladventures.ca.

Twitter is another popular service (referred to as micro-blogging) that allows you to express yourself in 140 characters or less, and share it instantly with all of your followers. Personally this is one online innovation I just don’t get...but if you want to know what Ashton Kutcher is up to every moment, be my guest.

YouTube has become so popular that the site hosts over 100 million videos and over 13 hours of video is uploaded every minute. Google bought YouTube in 2006 for \$1.65 billion. The site costs over \$1 million a day to operate, but Google says it will soon be profitable because the number of people viewing videos supported by advertising is increasing.

The web continues to grow as technology evolves and more and more users log on. It is estimated that the number of Internet users has increased from 361 million in 2000, to over 1.7 billion in 2009. This is over 25% of the world’s population.

The technologies and products I have discussed are only a fraction of the innovations we have seen in the last decade. And if that is any indication of what is to come, then we have even more to look forward to in the coming years! If you are like me, then I know you can hardly wait to see what is ahead.