



The three things that will impact the 'World Wide Web', on the road to 2010

The Internet has put us on a virtual communication runway. Our need, as members of civilized society, to communicate, share, create and be informed are the main drivers of products and services that impact the online space.

Social networking is set to have our youth glued to their computers. Although this concept of computing is only now beginning to find a firm footing in India, it is fast emerging as the equivalent of hanging out in malls for young people. With over 100 popular social networking sites, Indian Internet users are beginning to get bombarded with invitations mailed by family and friends to join a specific group focusing on a specific form of networking. The most popular form of social networking currently is the sharing of photographs. Over a dozen websites have already made their mark in this. Today, social networking sites rely on a simple advertising model of selling banner and text ads. Some even permit sponsored groups that help a marketer build communities.

The key to any social networking site is its uniqueness. Be it sharing photographs or running a campaign, this is a new medium to give vent to your opinions or perhaps understand new cultures and traditions through the words of social networking addicts worldwide.

User-generated content will become a dominating trend, reflecting the expansion of media production through new technologies that are accessible and affordable to the general public. These include digital video, blogging, podcasting, mobile phone photography and wikis. In addition to these technologies, user-generated content will also use a combination of open source, free software, and flexible licensing or related agreements to further reduce the barriers to collaboration, skill-building and discovery.

The mobile is the next big driver for Internet. It is now clear that the telecom revolution in India offers the best possible opportunity for companies to replicate the Internet experience on a cell phone. The experience of searching for information and thus meeting new people on the Internet

is slowing moving towards mobile. Even as people are just beginning to connect to the Internet through their cell phones, new subscribers continue to come on board in large numbers. This is a promising sign for using mobile as a means to connect to the Internet.

The All India GSM subscriber base grew from 121.43 million in March 2007 to 125.57 million in April 2007 – recording an addition of 4.13 million during the month under review. There was an overall growth of 3.40 per cent over the previous month.

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With several start-ups working on niche business models in the mobile Internet space, there are bound to be innumerable opportunities that will ultimately aim at driving subscribers to access Internet through their cell phone. In turn, this is expected to open the floodgates for a host of e-commerce companies.

The era of devices talking to one another, not merely to access Internet, is now visible on the horizon. With user-friendly devices, consumers are bound to multi-task and yet retain a common flavour, especially with several devices getting connected seamlessly. For instance, your favourite song being played inside your car radio can seamlessly shift to your MP3 player when you get out of the car. When you enter your room, your music system takes over and continues with the song. Perhaps, it could even show a video by activating your DVD player, seamlessly. Consumers are getting 'device agnostic' and hence content generation and the ability of any form of content to converge seamlessly with any device will remain crucial.

The World Wide Web will be effectively binding the global community in conversations, debates, shared experiences and more, only possible with the seamless support of technology that continues to scale up and satisfy the ever-growing needs of a communication-hungry web consumer.



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