Digital Living 2030: The Quality of Life Perspective

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Introduction

Technology has always shaped the ways we communicate. Six hundred years ago, it was the printing press. Today, it is the internet and social media, and in the future, artificial intelligence will enable robot journalism, social battlers and simultaneous translation between languages and cultures.

The Internet in general, and more specifically the massive entrance of Smartphone usage into our being, has revolutionized many aspects of human life, including commerce, advertising, social interactions and education. The rapidly increasing use of Smartphone's is a global phenomenon of this millennium. According to recent figures, the number of Smartphone users worldwide surpassed two billion in 2016. These rapid changes pose new challenges on the macro market level, as well as on the micro individual level.

Experts agree that by 2030 use of digital social interaction will be ubiquitous and integrated into our wearable's and maybe directly wired to our brains, where it can track our habits, beliefs and emotions. It is now agreed upon that our social and professional interactions will be ubiquitous and life-changing. The second wave of wireless communications engendered a reduced need for developing countries to invest in expansive infrastructures. Technologies themselves will further reduce the urban-rural split that characterized the first-wave technologies, especially in developing countries.

Opinion

The forces described above are already reshaping individual behavior and accelerating an evident psychological impact. Despite the convenience associated with technology consumption in general, and Smartphone usage more specifically, recent research works suggest that the massive usage of Smartphone's results in various negative effects [1-5]. For example, research proposes that excessive technology consumption via Smartphone may cause users to suffer from various symptoms such as stress, fatigue, sleeping disorders and depression. Research also proves that it may result in substantial reduction in mental health and well-being, as well as in quality of life indicators. Technology consumption blurs the boundaries between work and family and may increase the chances to participate in multi-tasking behavior, which causes stress because it reduces the ability of the brain to relax [6-8].

With these developments in mind, and knowing that 80% of Smartphone users visit social media, in addition to 55% who do so at least once a day, we should give the social and individual consequences of digital living in 5-10 years a closer attention. It is our goal, as well as responsibility, to put a greater focus on the potential positive implications of the significant advances in social choice theory, AI-based agents, analytics and algorithms on the one hand that can ease the information overload, as well as innovative deliberation interfaces for careful technology deployments on the other. This may have important implications on individuals, organizations and a modern healthier society as a whole. Furthermore, this may serve as the first step in achieving a desired change in technology consumer behavior. Looking ahead into digital living, this may lead to positive required adjustments in both organizations and governments' policies and regulations, such as labor laws and social conventions [9-11].

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