

MC³ Newsletter

December 2019

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The December meeting of the McHenry County Computer Club is **December 9, 2019 at Senior Services Associates 4704 Three Oaks Rd (just West of Holiday Inn across Rt. 31) Crystal Lake, IL 60014**

This is a new address!

NOTE: Enter "Activity Door" - north door on the east side.

Meeting Agenda

- Introductions & Reports
- Mail Merge - Bob Wagner
- Storing Your Digital Images - Al Edlund

Upcoming Demos - Subject to Change

To be determined.

Please let a board member know if you have any ideas for upcoming demos.



Our membership is \$26.00 a year.

NOTE: This fee offsets the running of the club; membership benefits include help with computer problems. Please pay Lyle Giese, our treasurer, or the designated Board Member in his absence.

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Ken Schuring

2020: A look back at the decade in tech - E. C. Baig, USA Today

“Alexa” was just another female name. Uber hadn’t taken anyone for a ride yet. And the buzz around Facebook had more to do with the fact that seemingly everyone you once knew was turning up on “The Social Network,” and less about the numerous data and privacy scandals that would tarnish the company’s reputation later on.

The year was 2010, the dawn of a new decade. And while 10 years is a long time for most every industry, in consumer tech it might as well be a lifetime.

Let's reminisce.

Ten years ago, self-driving cars were a pipedream, the iPad hadn’t launched yet, and neither had the photo-sharing phenomenon Instagram, still a couple of years away from being consumed by Facebook.

Chrome OS and Chromebook computers weren’t hatched yet either, but it wouldn’t be far into the new decade before Google’s cloud and browser-based approach to computing posed a real challenge to the longtime PC status quo that was Microsoft Windows.

The Microsoft Xbox One entertainment system with Kinect motion controller (top), console and game controller (bottom)

Microsoft was doing its own innovating, though. In 2010, it introduced the hands-free Kinect motion controller for the Xbox 360 that recognized our gestures and began to get video gamers off their butts.

Five years later, under new CEO Satya Nadella, the Windows 10 operating system came out to mostly positive reviews.

No longer dominant

It may not have been immediately obvious, but several companies that began the decade in apparent positions of strength were enjoying their last hurrahs.

Social networking stalwart MySpace still claimed around 57 million unique visitors at the start of 2010, but its precipitous decline had begun (and by then, Facebook had already lapped them).

The arrow was also starting to point the wrong way for other companies about to lose their once vice-like grips on the market. Nokia and BlackBerry (then under Research In Motion) would soon become permanent victims of the rapid rise of Apple’s iPhones, Samsung’s Galaxy line and handsets from other Android vendors.

Similar autopsies could be written about Microsoft’s Windows Phones, which would also disappear well before the decade ended.

Fell flat?

Then again, to even be considered a “has-been” means you would have had to have been a “been” in the first place. But some “hot” tech never even had its moment in the sun.

If you believed the over-the-top hype at the Consumer Electronics Show in January 2010, a stampede of 3D televisions was about to replace the familiar, two-dimensional TV images at the center of your home theater, adding the lifelike illusion of depth. Suffice it to say, that tech revolution fell flat.

TV makers eventually did better peddling ever-cheaper 4K televisions.

Other highly touted technologies during the decade may have come too soon, but they shouldn’t be written off long-term, either. The 2010s surely weren’t the right time for Google Glass, at least for

regular folks, or, much later, faddish Snap Spectacles. The expectation, though, is that in one form or another, smart glasses (or even smart contact lenses) will have a future.

The same can likely be said for consumer-focused virtual reality systems, even as most mainstream customers balked at wearing VR googles from the likes of Facebook-owned Oculus and HTC. The earliest systems such as the Oculus Rift and HTC Vive boasted cool tech. But the systems were a pain to set up, required pricey computers, were expensive in their own right, lacked compelling software and in some instances made people sick.

Tablets stuck around

Only Moses may have been associated with a more famous tablet by the time Steve Jobs, to much fanfare, unveiled the first iPad in January 2010. And dominated by Apple's slate, which launched that April, the tablet category was very much a buzzy business for a while. Don't get me wrong, Apple has sold more than 400 million iPads through the decade, still sells millions more, and the overall business, which includes inexpensive Fire tablets from Amazon, has stabilized.

Apple CEO Tim Cook said last year that iPads outsold notebooks from leading PC vendors. But it was always unrealistic to expect tablets to fully replace laptops. And standalone tablets have been cannibalized to a degree by convertible 2-in-1 laptops, as well as smartphones with screens that have grown to "phablet"-sized proportions.

Everything is smart

Many of the technological leaps that came through the decade have been made possible by speedy advances in wireless bandwidth. The transition from 3G networks to faster 4G LTE and Wi-Fi have helped usher in the age of cord-cutting and how we consume media, a transition very much still taking place today (with the next-generation 5G networks that will fuel the next decade just emerging).

For better or worse, just about all the products and services that made a mark in the 2010s, or at least tried to, have been labeled "smart."

Thus, we have smart thermostats, smart fridges, smart watches, smart TVs and smart speakers such as Amazon Echo and Google Home.

"I've been describing this decade as the connected age. We've been talking about Internet of Things for about the past 10 years, and over that period of time, everything has become connected," says Steve Koenig, vice president of research at the Consumer Technology Association.

Maybe the biggest thing the tech industry brought to consumers this past decade, or at the very least the loudest, are the voice-based personal assistants that live in smart speakers, not to mention on our phones, in our cars and, dare we say, even in our bathrooms. No, Alexa, the Google Assistant and Siri were not yet a thing way back in 2010. But is it not a true measure of how far consumer tech has come ever since, that we can now ask Alexa to flush the toilet?

Windows 10 Your Phone app: Now all Android users can make calls from their PC Liam Tung, ZDNet Microsoft's Your Phone app for syncing a phone with a PC is now available for all Windows 10 users and, in theory, all Android smartphones above version 7.0.

Microsoft has long been working to bring something of a macOS-iOS experience to Windows 10 via its Your Phone app, available on the Microsoft Store.

One of the key abilities of the app is to make and receive Android phone calls from your PC, but it also lets users check messages and view recent photos from the phone.

For the past few months Microsoft has been testing the ‘Calls’ feature on preview builds from its Windows 10 19H1, version 1903. It kicked off the feature with the Galaxy Note 10 launch this August and has been gradually rolling it out to other, mostly Samsung Galaxy phones.

In October, Microsoft released the Link Your Phone feature to the Samsung Galaxy S10, S10+, S10e, S10 5G, and the Galaxy Fold, allowing users to link their phone to the PC and send messages, manage notifications, sync photos, and mirror a phone to the PC. The update also allows users to control phone apps from the PC.

On Wednesday, it announced the general availability of the Your Phone Calls feature in a tweet.

While the Your Phone app does support iPhone too, Microsoft appears to be focusing its efforts on Android.

General availability is going to be more important for all Android users with Windows 10 PCs, but it also comes as Microsoft gears up to launch its new Android phone, the Surface Duo.

Microsoft will have all of 2020 to iron out any bugs with the Your Phone app, as well as the Call and Link Your Phone features before releasing the Surface Duo next US holidays 2020.

The Your Phone app seems to be catching on with Windows 10 users. In September, the Your Phone Companion Android app only had 10 million downloads on Google Play. That figure has now climbed to over 50 million, according to Google Play statistics. The app has an overall score of 4.3 out of 5, but reviews suggest Microsoft has a few features to fix yet.

Hulu launches its viewer-friendly ‘binge watch ads’ - Sarah Perez, TechCrunch

Hulu today is launching a new kind of ad experience that allows brands to specifically target binge-watchers — that is, viewers who are watching multiple episodes of a favorite program over a long stretch of time. These “binge watch ads” utilize machine learning techniques to predict when a viewer has begun to binge watch a show, then serves up contextually relevant ads that acknowledge a binge is underway. This culminates when the viewer reaches the third episode, at which point they’re informed the next episode is ad-free or presents a personalized offer from the brand partner.

The binge watch ad concept was first announced at Hulu’s annual NewFronts presentation in May, where it introduces its new shows, features and ad formats to advertisers. The company regularly experiments with new advertising formats designed to better cater to a streaming audience in a less obtrusive way. For example, Hulu already offers “pause ads” which only appear when the viewer presses the pause button.

Hulu says it made sense to target binge watchers because binging is now such a common way for people to watch their favorite shows. Today, 75% of U.S. consumers say they binge watch, and on Hulu specifically, nearly 50% of ad-supported viewing hours are spent during binge watch sessions. Hulu defines a “binge” as a viewer watching three or more episodes of a series at a given time.

The debut advertisers to capitalize on the new binge watch ad format include Kellogg’s, Maker’s Mark, and Georgia-Pacific, by way of Hulu’s exclusive launch agency partner, Publicis Media.

Kellogg’s will promote Cheez-It Snap’d snacks during their binge ads, while Georgia Pacific will tout its Sparkle paper towels. Marker’s Mark, of course, will promote its bourbon.