

v-Fluence CEO Contends Growth in Mobile “Apps” Forebodes PC’s Demise

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Aside from making life easier for us on-the-run, mobile apps are also having the unwitting effect of training us for the eventual demise of the PC – and organizations should get ready for that new world, according to Jay Byrne, CEO of online market research and support agency v-Fluence Interactive. “Point-of-consumption content opportunities and risks are booming, and organizations that are not positioning themselves now for the related shifts will find themselves at significant disadvantages,” Byrne said.

In a new blog entry, Byrne predicts the demise of the PC, noting that it will “not surprise anyone who has studied the history of the ever-shrinking computer.

“It may be harder for the X and Y generations to envision a completely PC-free world,” Byrne writes. “However, they will be leading the way with their rapid adoption of mobile and other point-of-consumption interactive tools.”

Those seeking consumer and other key stakeholder influence should ask themselves some key questions: Where and when are there points of decision and consumption, and how do I effectively participate at those places and at those times? For many, those transaction points will be via some mobile application interfacing with a smart phone, car GPS system or other Web-enabled appliance or device.

For example, Apple recently announced its billionth app download, and a Pew Internet & American Life report predicts that by 2020, more content will be consumed by mobile devices than all other platforms— PC included. While apps like the Whoopee Cushion or the iBeer may not seem threatening to major brands or organization promoters, they are training and moving us away from bulkier interface devices for our entertainment, news, product research and purchases at an amazing pace. For example, food shoppers in Japan are already using mobile phone cameras enabled with bar code readers to check on the quality of individual cuts of meat and compare products with mobile shopping assistants that draw content from consumer-generated sources. Also notable, this year’s Annual Webby Awards will feature five new categories in the mobile space lauding best uses in mobile apps, video and integration of GPS or Location Technology. Finally, the “home of the future,” as promoted by Microsoft, does not have a single PC or laptop on site but enables us to envision seamless interactions with smart appliances like refrigerators and medicine cabinets, which can (will) track and manage our food and healthcare uses and needs.

v-Fluence Interactive’s research and monitoring has evaluated an array of emerging apps across food, nutrition, health and energy industries that range from mobile “best gas price” finders that draw from consumer-provided price comparisons linked to your location while driving, to pharmaceutical “pill phones” to remind you to take and/or order your prescriptions.

“Those with the most successful profiles integrate social participation by end users over suppliers. It’s not yet time to abandon your social media strategies for an all-mobile focus, but, as with all aspects of the Web from blogs and beyond, the best approach is layered, building on a foundation that includes a strategic, integrated and best practice-based Web 1.0 presence that extends effectively into 2.0 spaces and the mobile arena,” Byrne writes

Today’s social networks, wikis and other channels are already merging into mobile pipelines (à la Twitter) with apps that integrate QR and bar code readers with GPS and other mobile mash ups to give us consumer (versus supplier) ratings and purchasing options. Brands and organizations with effective and validated presences in the places where people are learning to get trusted information will better transition to a quickly growing world of point-of-consumption interactions.”

About Jay Byrne: Author Jay Byrne is CEO of v-Fluence Interactive, an online market research and support agency. Byrne is a published author (Let Them Eat Precaution, AEI Press 2005) with numerous articles appearing in public affairs and marketing journals. He is a frequent speaker at trade and professional conferences on interactive marketing.

About v-Fluence Interactive: With locations in San Diego, St. Louis, Boston, Chicago and Washington, DC, v-Fluence provides major brands and organizations the online analytics, strategy development and execution support they need to be measurably successful on the Web. For more on the company, visit www.v-fluence.com.

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