

It's the year of the app, y'all

 By [Toby Shapshak](#)

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This will be the year of the app. Those little applications will become the dominant form of how we interact with services.

While it had about 50-million website visits a month last year, millions of people use Twitter via apps on their cellphones or computer (like the excellent but systems-hungry TweetDeck).

I read more of *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* because their iPhone apps are so much easier to use than reading via the web.

We no longer visit websites, we access services. This trend began with RSS feeds, appropriately for Really Simple Syndication.

They are a clever way of subscribing to regular feeds of news or opinions. Twitter is a progression of this: a human-driven algorithm of appropriate links and stories.

The links in my Twitter world are filtered by people whose opinions I trust and whose sense of newsworthiness I agree with. It's a return to the people-managed news industry of bums-in-seats editors scrolling through reams of articles for you, the reader.

They do it more effectively than any software robot or algorithm, better than Google News, they are learning machines, able to adapt and learn. Human brains still trump silicon. For now.

Web going mobile

Ironically, among the other big trends we'll see is one about the rise of something called Android. Google's free operating system for cellphones made a modest splash last year, but this is the year great things are expected of it, especially after Google's own handset, Nexus One, was unveiled in December.

The iPhone, with less than 1% of global market share, will continue to be the leader - as Apple itself is, with about 5% of global computer market share.

The rumoured iSlate, if it materialises, could be another game-changer - much like Amazon Kindle, whose effect on book publishing is unfolding.

The web is going mobile. Handsets are getting more powerful, networks are jacking up their speed - in the kind of competitive race not seen since the tussle to open up new railroad routes in the American Wild West circa 1880.

LTE, for Long Term Evolution, is an acronym you'll hear a lot this year. It's the next evolution of data-whizzing mobile networks, and the first such network was demonstrated late last year.

The web just got faster to your cellphone. LTE, by the way, is a TLA, a three-letter acronym.

Privacy, paramount

Privacy will be a big issue. Our lives just got a whole lot more public and everyone is starting to notice. My advice is to have a strong password, add numbers, capitals and symbols for whatever cloud-computing services you use.

I also suspect 2010 will be the year Google's monopoly and centrality in our online worlds will come under greater scrutiny. Added to privacy concerns, this is a timebomb going to go off.

Similarly, security is another of the big trends we'll hear more about this year and one of my companies to watch is Kaspersky Lab. Perhaps because the Moscow-based security software makers are awake before us, Kaspersky has grown in stature in recent years.

On the computing front, the biggest threat to Microsoft will not come from Google but VMware (and perhaps also Citrix), companies that make virtualisation software that lets you run "virtual" and not real servers or computers.

Virtualisation is the hottest thing in the tech industry right now, especially with the large data centres that enable cloud computing.

More virtual servers mean less physical servers and less electricity consumed.

Green consciousness has reached the computer industry.

Let the games begin.

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