COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATE 2026

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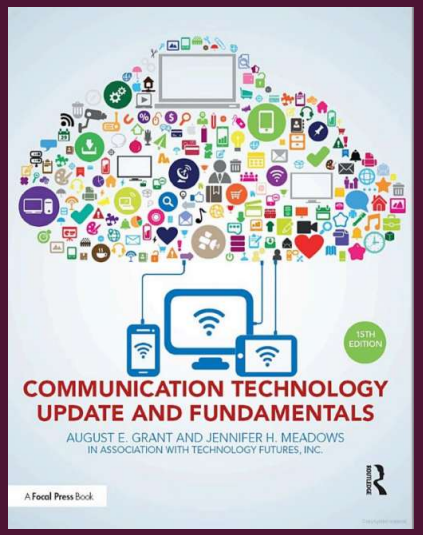
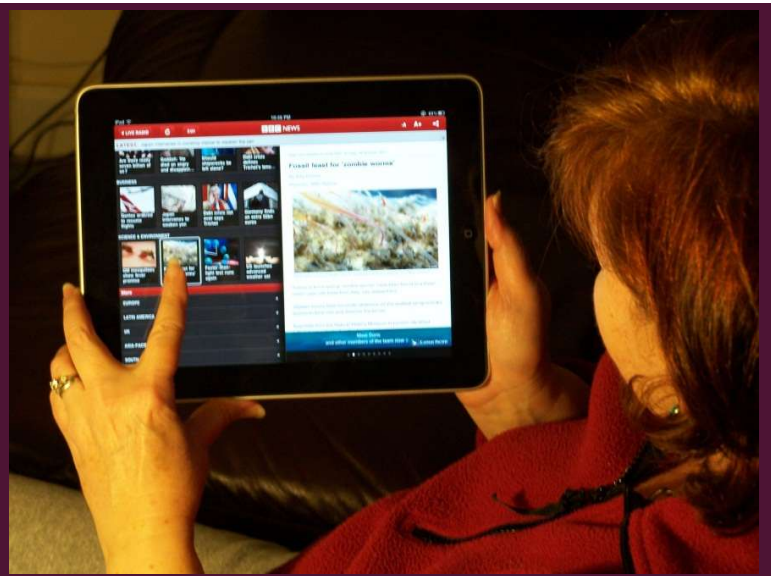




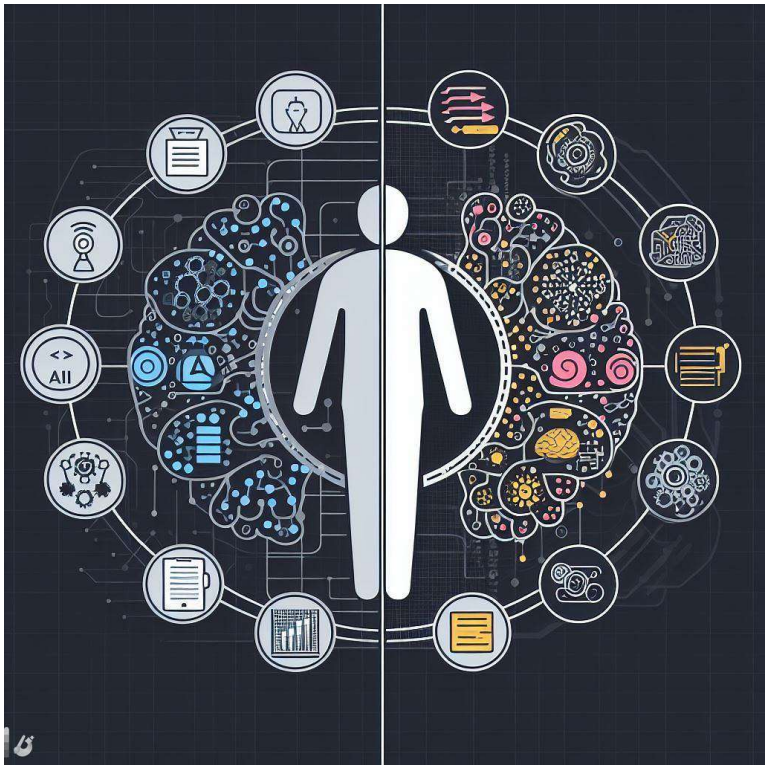
2026: THE YEAR OF AI

But what does that mean?

AI

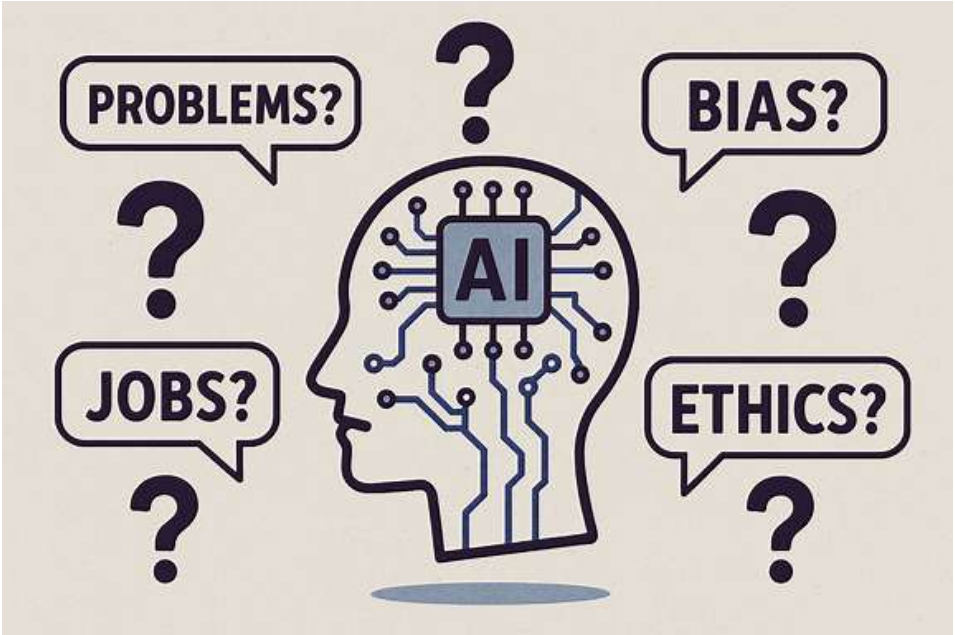
COMPETING DEFINITIONS

- Artificial Intelligence
  - Implies consciousness and independence
- Augmented Intelligence
  - Implies dependence and task-association



AI: A FEW BIG ISSUES

- AI Slop
- “Hallucinations”
- Energy Required



LESSON FROM DOTCOM BOOM

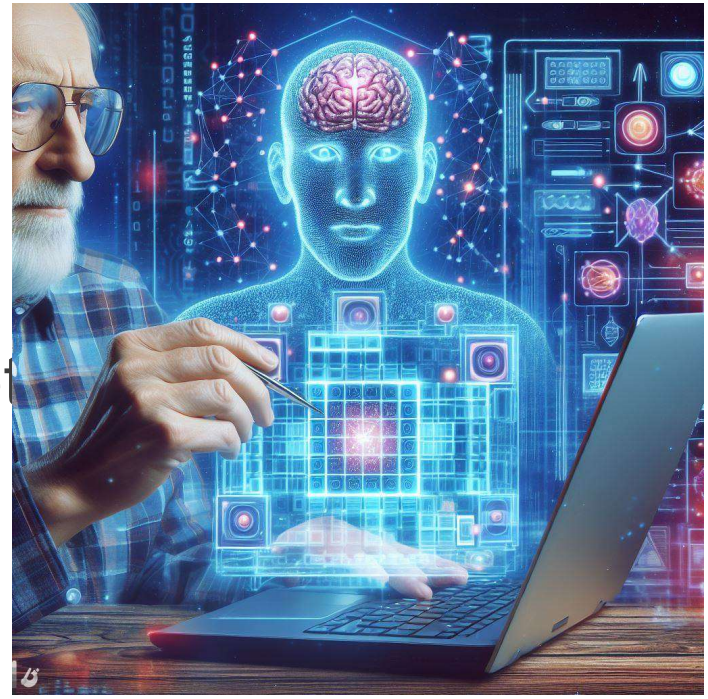
- 1999-2001—The “New Economy”
  - Clicks, visits, interactions
  - “Digital Heroin”
- 2001—The Dotcom Bust
  - Realization that revenue is needed to maintain spending and investment

AI: BIGGEST ISSUE

$$$$$

AI APPLICATIONS IN COMM TECH

- Content creation
- Personalized delivery and marketing
- Organization of files, photos, video, et



POTENTIAL AI GAMECHANGER?

- Education
  - Adaptive learning on steroids
  - Early research shows AI superior to tutoring
  - Everyone learns at their own pace
  - But time and discussion are still needed

IMPACTS OF AI

- Process changes—new ways of doing the same job we are doing now
  - Creating graphics
  - Writing press releases
  - Compiling summaries
- Product changes—new media output, content, or services
  - Adaptive learning
  - Big data analysis
  - Custom entertainment and information delivery

MORE AI

- How will AI affect communication technologies in general?
  - Moderate increase in bandwidth demand
    - Data centers will do heavy lifting
  - Significant increase in “recommendation engines” and personalization
    - Goal is to maximize time spent on individual media outlets
  - Revolutionary potential for
    - Education and training

WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON?

Organizational change is rippling across media

- Mergers (Warner Bros Discovery)
- Divestitures (Versant)

FIGHT FOR WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY

WARNER BROS.
DISCOVERY

SOME HISTORICAL CONTEXT ABOUT WARNER BROS

- 1996: Ted Turner (with help) buys Time Warner
- 2000: AOL merges with Time Warner
- 2018: AT&T buys Time Warner
- 2022: Discovery Global merges with Warner Bros
- 2026: Warner Bros will be purchased by ??????

TELEVISION

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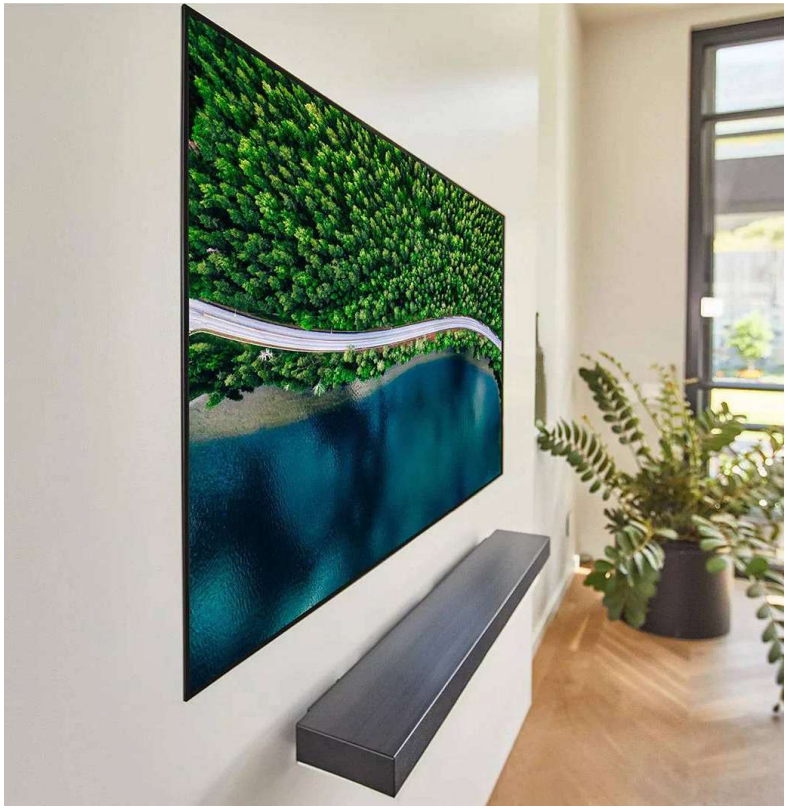
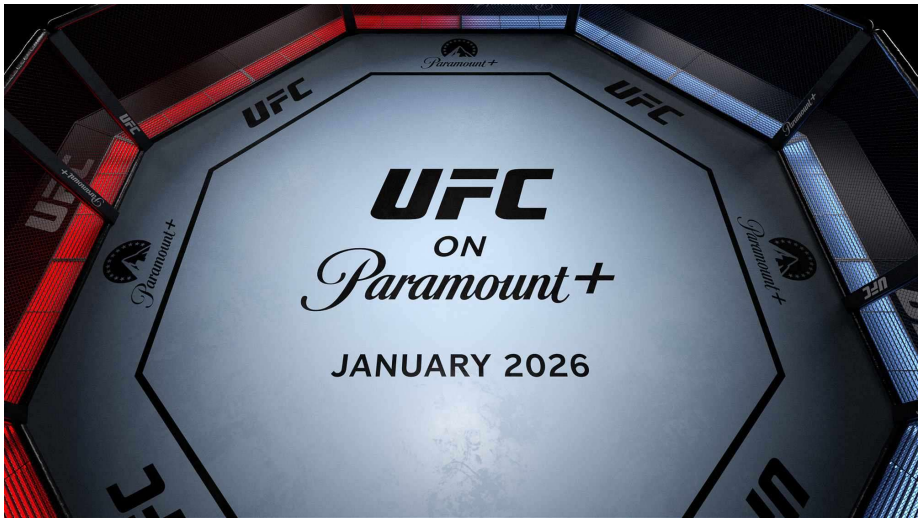
BIG NEWS AT 2026 CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW



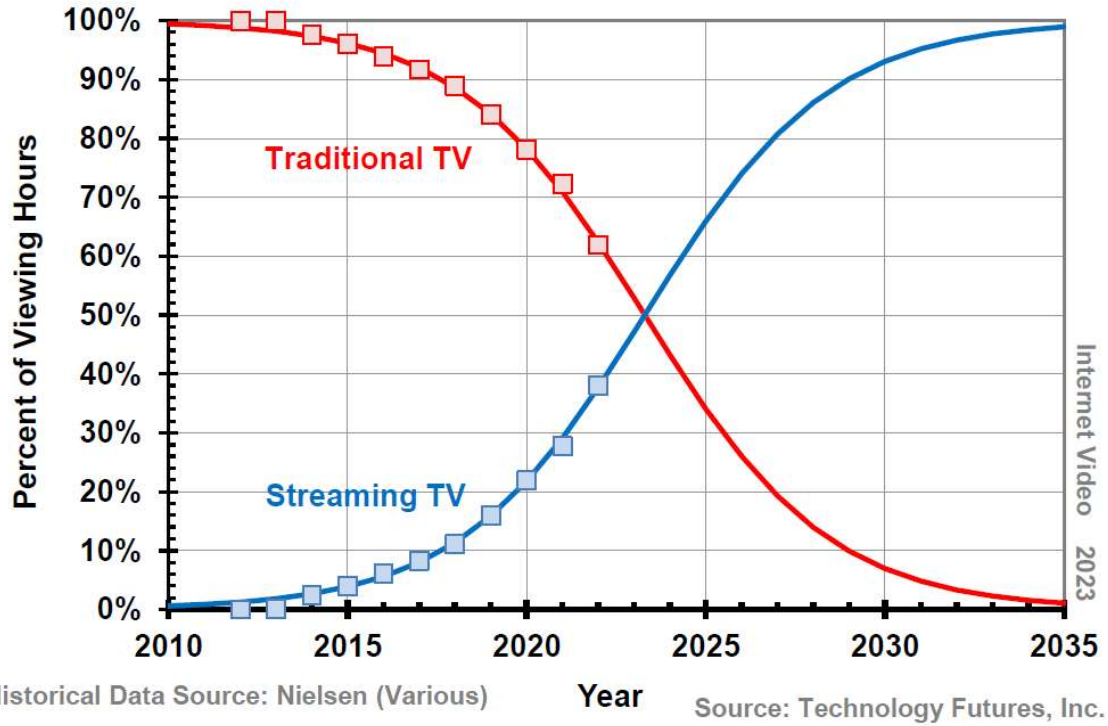
- Wallpaper TV?

SPORTS SLOWLY MOVING TO STREAMING



Projection Becomes Reality:

Traditional TV vs Streaming TV – 2023 TFI Forecast



Historical Data Source: Nielsen (Various)

Source: Technology Futures, Inc.

TECHNOLOGY FUTURES INC.

STREAMING TODAY…BUT MAYBE NOT TOMORROW

DISRUPTION BY BROADCAST NETWORKS

How long before networks move to direct streaming to consumers?

AND THEN WHAT HAPPENS TO LOCAL TV STATIONS?

- News
- Sports
- Community activities

- Most important: Advertising
  - Local businesses need media to reach prospective customers

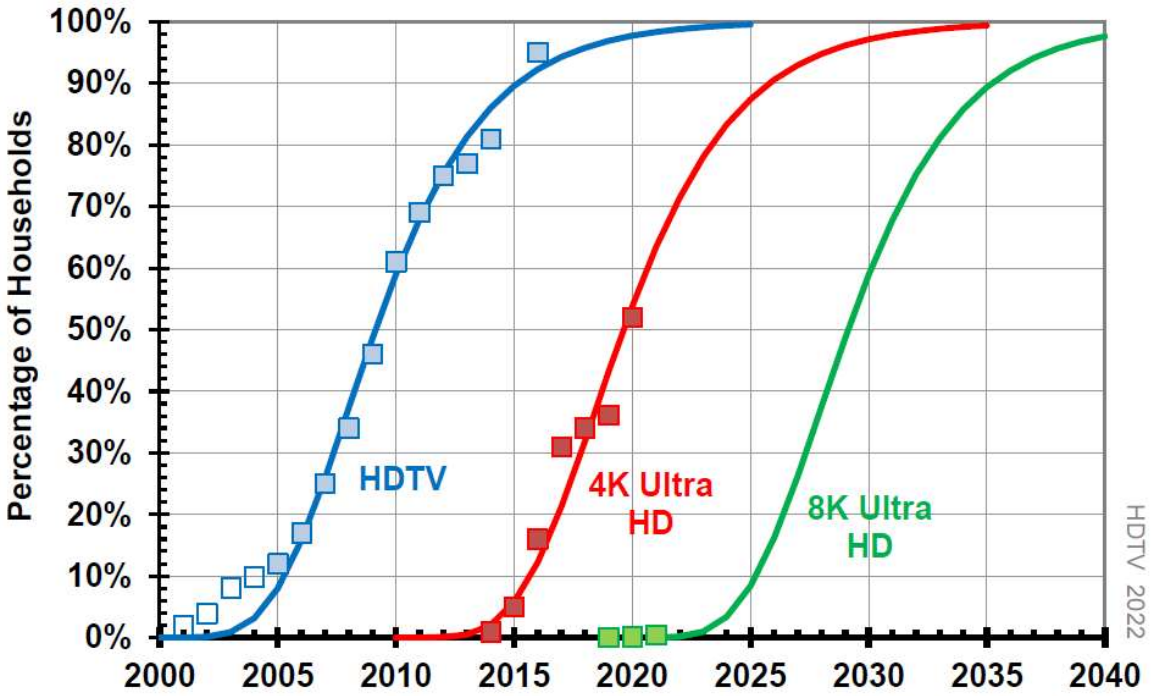
ATSC 3.0 BROADCAST STANDARD

Biggest Innovation in TV that no one sees!

- Delivery of 4K
- Up to 120 fps
- HDR
- Enhanced audio
- Mobile television
- Need for bandwidth
- Broadcast transition
- Targeted Advertising

HIGH-RESOLUTION TV

Ultra HD Households (4K and 8K) - 2022 TFI Forecast



Historical data sources: HDTV - 2001-2004 Misc, 2005- Leichtman Research; 4K 2014-15 Strategy Analytics,2016-2020 Consumer Technology Assc, ; 8K - Strategic Analytcis

Source: Technology Futures, Inc.

TECHNOLOGY FUTURES INC.

CINEMA

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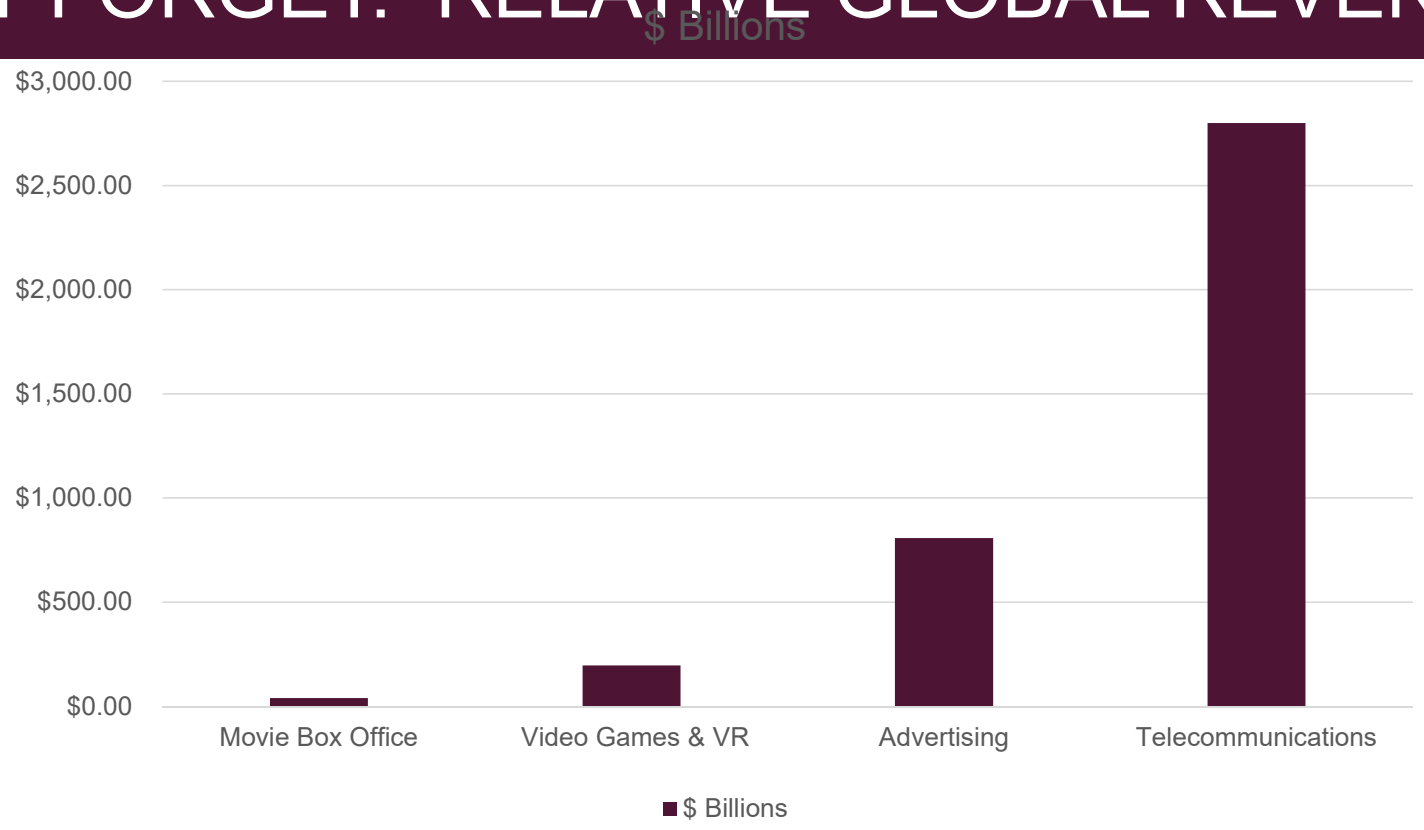
2025 CINEMA DEVELOPMENTS

Rebound continues

More than $1 billion each global box office

DON’T FORGET: RELATIVE GLOBAL REVENUES



VIDEO GAMES

2025 Global Video Game Revenue: $197 billion

(up 7.5%) from 2024

Source: VideoGamesChronicle

(Image credit: Nintendo)

STILL WAITING ON CONVERGENCE OF VIDEO GAMES AND VR

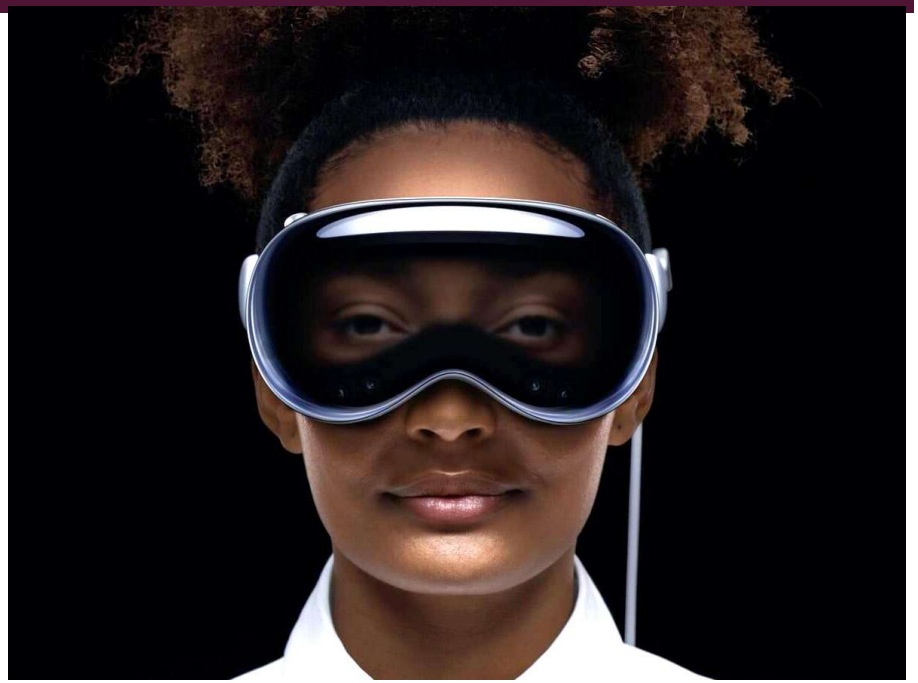
Source: Cnet

VR

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: APPLE VISION PRO

- High cost
- Limited app availability

- Potential applications
  - Industrial
  - Military
  - …but maybe not gaming



VR NOTES

- Meta continues to dominate with low price
  - Sub $500 prices
  - Untethered
- Physical limitations
  - Accessibility
  - 15-minute limit
  - Need for dedicated space

WHITHER THE “METAVERSE?”

- Virtual words are unconnected
- Key question: Will they become connected as email and internet were in the 1990s?

VR PREDICTIONS

- Commercial applications will overwhelm all others
  - Consider the evolution of the internet
- HMDs will be less popular that multi-screen setups
  - Curved
  - Stacked
  - Surround
- Still looking for a killer app…

BUT META IS MAKING ADVANCES IN AR

PREDICTION:

- AR enabled glasses will continue to quietly grow in popularity

DIGITAL SIGNAGE

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SPHERE AND SPHERE 2

APPLICATIONS OF DIGITAL SIGNAGE

- Advertising
- Information
- Entertainment
- Wayfinding
- Atmosphere

KEY FACTORS FOR DIGITAL SIGNS

- Efficiency
- Environmental (including power consumption)
- Regulation (distraction and neighborhood aesthetics)
- Function

SOCIAL MEDIA

KEY SOCIAL MEDIA DEVELOPMENTS

- Increased prohibition of access by children and teens
  - Research studies demonstrate harm to children from social media use
- Status of TikTok in the U.S.
- Issues with advertising efficiency

QUANTUM COMPUTING

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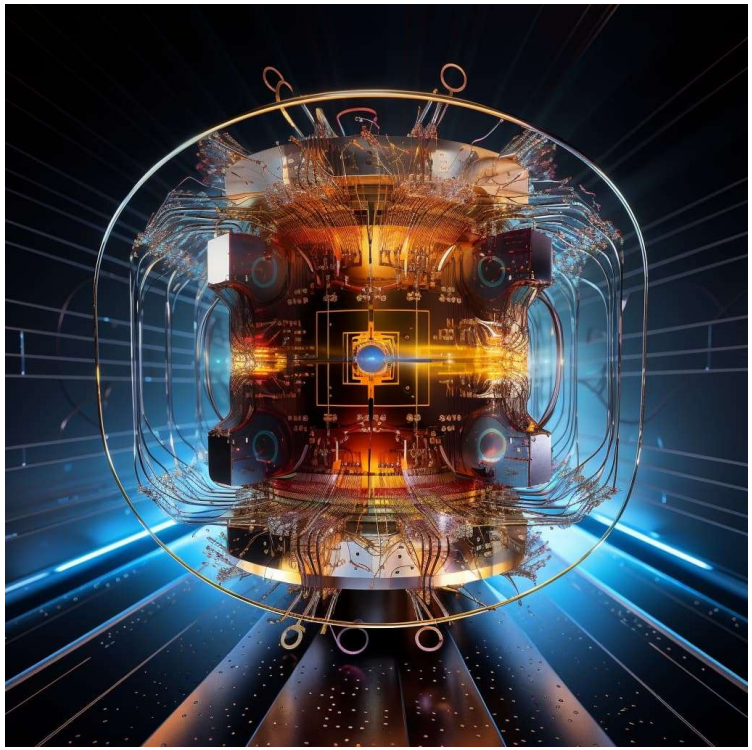
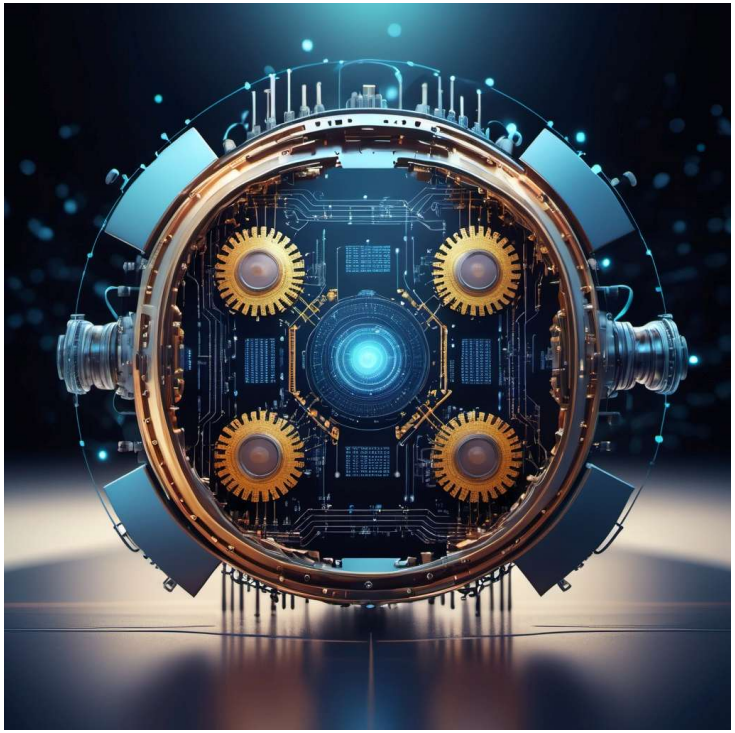
LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD…

Quantum computing may be the biggest gamechanger of all…



QUANTUM COMPUTING IMPACT

- Computing power
- Centralized processing
  - Will require networking
- Turbocharge AI revolution



REMOTE WORK

REMOTE WORK ISSUES

- Managerial desire for control
- Efficiency for workers
  - Commuting time
  - Child care
  - Personal control
- Efficiency for employers
  - Cost of workspace
  - Need for employee interactino

PREDICTIONS

PREDICTIONS

- AI will have a reset as focus moves to revenue
- Audience has effortlessly moved to streaming—trend will continue
- Anytime, anywhere communication will become even more pervasive, but consumers may revolt by logging off
- Changes in ownership will happen much more quickly than changes in technology

THANK YOU!

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