

SERIOUSLY FUN OUTRAGEOUSLY ADDICTIVE

MINDSHARE'S



KID
GAMER
CHUCK
REMOTE

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Every so often I have a Minority Report moment. You know, when today's technology actually lives up to that film's futuristic world. The most recent occurrence was in my living room shortly after I installed our new Xbox 360 Kinect. For those of you living in a bunker, Kinect is a marvellous device from Microsoft that enables you to play games without any remote control. Kind of like a Wii on steroids. Not only does it ditch the remote, it also scans you, recognizes you, and even listens to you. Before you know it you'll find yourself jumping around and talking to your TV set. It's cool, or as my kids would say, it's totes amazeballs.

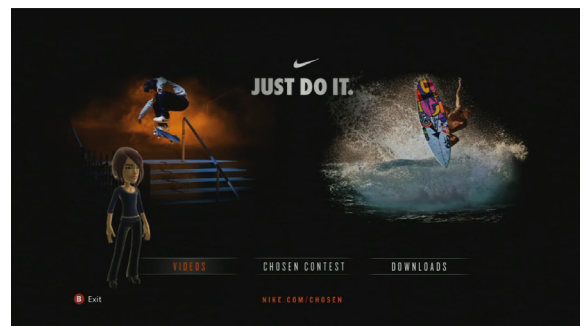
Microsoft is now arguably leading the next great evolution in interactivity //

Kinect is just one example of new technology that is changing the way we engage with devices. Just in the last few years Apple has taught us to swipe and touch rather than click and type. Microsoft is now arguably leading the next great evolution in interactivity via its motion sensor and voice recognition technology. In essence, you don't have to touch anything at all. It's completely touchless. It's also a major step-change in increasingly intelligent and responsive objects of all kinds, not just gaming consoles.



Xbox Kinect by Microsoft

Microsoft is of course eager to capitalize and commercialize on the Kinect experience. Thus they are offering brands all kinds of opportunities to engage with their target audiences in ways simply not feasible with the old hyperlinked Internet. For example, Mindshare worked with Nike to launch a motion-based version of their Chosen video contest. Users could use their hands to navigate through video footage and interact with the content.



Nike Xbox Chosen Contest

Microsoft has also introduced a new ad format called NUAds, which uses voice recognition to let you simply command your Xbox to take some action with the content. For example, you can choose to like and share an Xbox ad with your Facebook friends, tweet about your branded gaming experience, or request more information on a particular product. Wait until Microsoft's recently acquired Skype gets bundled into the device.



Microsoft's NUAds voice command technology

Microsoft is also evolving the Kinect sensors to identify products in your living room. At a minimum this data could be used to target consumers with related products. Imagine Kinect identifying some old Kia car keys in the room. Combine this with the knowledge that you have three young kids and voila a new Ford Galaxy ad appears. Brands could also use Kinect to reward their loyal customers. Imagine Kinect detecting that you are drinking a Pepsi and promptly rewarding you with some extra gaming points or some free content.

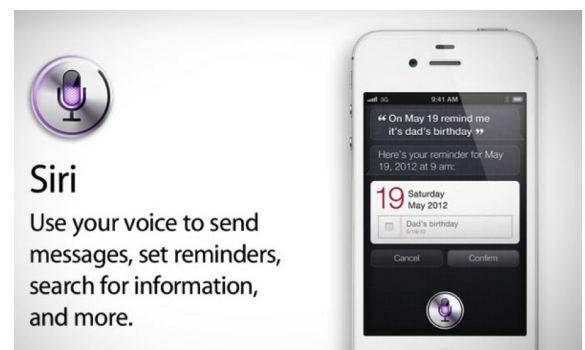
Several TV manufacturers have taken notice and are now integrating front-facing cameras into their flat screens, thus enabling your television to immediately recognize who is in the room and therefore what content to serve and which ads are being watched. Once the technology scales, savvy media agencies will be able to negotiate pay-for-performance TV buys based on whether someone has actually seen the ad.

Of course this is only the beginning. Microsoft has wisely opened up the Kinect platform to let consumers and brands come up with new innovative uses of the platform. This Kinect sandbox has already produced some real gems, including Burger King's mash-up with Kinectimals that lets kids use a physical toy from the restaurant to unlock and control a unique virtual version. Even more exciting was Steve Ballmer's announcement at CES 2012 that Microsoft will begin to bundle its killer technology into more devices with the newly launched Kinect for Windows.

KINECT
for  **Windows**

Kinect for Windows

Microsoft is not the only game in town. Both Google and Apple are working on their own voice recognition technology and services. Google now offers a voice search application in its Android OS as well as an ingenious voice translation service essential for every global trotter. Apple is finally exploiting their acquisition of Siri, which enables you to carry on an intelligent conversation with your iPhone 4S. Apple fanatics have developed a virtual crush on Siri as she helps schedule meetings, advise how to tie your bowtie, or give you the weather forecast. While neither Google nor Apple has opened up code to mash-ups, you can imagine a day when marketers will use the technology to create useful Siri applications, everything from a virtual HSBC financial guru to a Nike training coach.



Apple's Siri Application

Other new technologies are emerging that require even less work from the consumer. Over the last few years companies like NEC, Microsoft, and Intel have been experimenting with facial recognition technology that identifies the gender and age of the people in front of an outdoor billboard or poster. While it can't yet detect whether you're thirsty for a beer, elements of these digital billboard ads can be adapted in real-time to make the message more relevant and impactful. Not satisfied with just facial recognition, some technicians are busy tinkering around with RFID recognition and retinal scanning. Other labs are busy building the Cognitive Internet, which involves embedding smart chips in to your body so you simply become one with the ubiquitous Internet all around you. I'm not making that up. The Matrix may actually become a reality.

However, right now there is a growing opportunity for smart brands to leverage these new technologies to engage with consumers in much more innovative and meaningful ways. Many marketers have spent the last few years moving online and its interactivity – clicks and engagement – further up the creative ideation and media planning process. Likewise, they will also need to ensure their teams, when appropriate, are aware of the opportunities and potential importance of motion and voice.

Even our metrics taxonomy will need to adapt to reflect different and improved measures of advertising success //

Even our metrics taxonomy will need to adapt to reflect different and improved measures of advertising success; simply knowing who is really in front of the TV during an ad campaign will be immensely helpful, not to mention the more accurate detection of engagement and dwell time. For example, Cisco has developed a technology that can assess whether you are frowning or smiling at TV content, including ads. Talk about real-time panels.



Microsoft and Intel facial recognition technology

Yes, many of us are still clicking and typing, or swiping and pointing with touchscreens. However, thanks to Microsoft we can now gesture to and talk with our devices. If you don't believe me go out and get yourself an Xbox 360 Kinect. I guarantee you'll have your very own Minority Report moment.



Have your own Minority Report moment



Minority Report, 20th Century Fox (2002)