

New Media Predictions for 2009: from Croydon to Kenya (Carnival of Journalism)

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This month's Big Question from [David Cohn](#) for the [Carnival](#) collection of US and UK journalist/academic bloggers is "What Are Your Positive New Media Predictions For 2009?"

If I was to answer this one honestly I would say that there will be a mini dot-com bust next year in the UK as fragile new media enterprises are credit-crunched.

The one funding show left in town is [C4iP](#) and it's initial modest hand-outs appear to be going to the better established online entrepreneurs with fairly unspectacular projects.

At a time of consumer underconfidence the public are less likely to want to experiment with the more marginal and experimental applications, gadgets or online enterprises.

So overall there will be a consolidation in people's habits, a gathering around iPhone, Facebook and Google rather than new adventures into virgin territory of the new media jungle.

So what cheer do I have in my non-denominational Santa sack? Here's a few hope-filled thought parcels:

1. Technologists will finally realise that their devices have to be easily usable. Sky Plus works because it is easy, ditto iPhone. But far too many websites still have lengthy registrations, too many gizmos take too long to master. Simplicity and value will return as virtues. Hence the success of the Acer laptop.
2. Prices will fall. Packages like iPhone really are taking the mickey. My crap ISP provider will feel the pain of my end of contract departure to greener fields. The Internet has been brilliant at creating free content, but the overall cost of being digital is too large a part of a falling household income. Hence the success of the Acer laptop.
3. The clearout will allow us to build a more environmentally sustainable new media. The [Global Sustainability Initiative report](#) found that digital media growth is a major contributor to global warming. In 2009 we won't picket Stansted Airport, we will go protest at PC World:

The ICT sector's own emissions are expected to increase, in a business as usual (BAU) scenario, from 0.53 billion tonnes (Gt) carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) in 2002 to 1.43 GtCO₂e in 2020. But specific ICT opportunities identified in this report can lead to emission reductions five times the size of the sector's own footprint, up to 7.8 GtCO₂e, or 15% of total BAU emissions by 2020.

4. I have just got back from [Kenya](#) where the most important new media device that is transforming communications in Africa is the cheap mobile phone. Banking, voting, political campaigning, business and education are all being revolutionised by a device that gets around African official corruption, incompetence and logistical barriers. I saw one [community radio station](#) in a slum that uses the mobile to news-gather, to collect classified advertising, social messages and create instant interactivity with its impoverished audience. 2009 will be the year when this trend explodes as new providers and fresh applications arrive.

So there you go, think Green, think Globally, and perhaps 2009 could be positive after all.

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