

Letter from the Editor - April 2018

By: Tim Young

***“Don’t spend time beating on a wall
hoping to transform it into a door.”***

-Coco Chanel



It’s tough to talk about the future and technological progress without someone wryly noting that, while technology has improved, they thought they’d have flying cars by now. Or jetpacks. Or some other sci-fi staple.

“Where’s my flying car?” they say. Flying cars? Have you seen how people drive *regular* cars? And you want to improve the situation by making them airborne? I’d settle for a society in which we’d really cracked the code on how to use turn signals.

So our cars are thankfully terrestrial for the moment. But look at what we *can* do! Global communications are nothing short of astonishing. The way we experience the arts, entertainment, and media are constantly shifting in unpredictable ways. The corner bookshop was killed off by Borders and Barnes & Noble (in the US, anyway. Insert your local book megashop here). Borders and B&N were killed off or at least mortally wounded by Amazon, which saw its own business model transformed by the rise of e-books. That made a little breathing room for the corner bookshop to get back in the game.

And these shifts aren’t guaranteed to pan out. Sometimes companies have to change what they are or what they do. Nokia began as a pulp mill. Avon was started by a door-to-door bookseller who began carrying perfume samples to attract female customers.

My favorite example is the now-defunct electronics purveyor Coleco, maker of early ‘80s game console ColecoVision. Their name was a shortened version of Connecticut Leather Company, which began in the 1930s selling shoe repair supplies. Let’s just say they branched out. For a time, they were the largest manufacturer of above-ground swimming pools in the world. They briefly manufactured and sold snowmobiles. They introduced the world to the Cabbage Patch Kids. And now they do nothing, selling off their assets and closing shop in the late ‘80s. That’s the way the cookie crumbles sometimes.

So yes, transformation is tricky. And to echo the thoughts of the legendary Coco Chanel, not every opportunity will pan out. Sometimes a wall is a wall, no matter how much you knock on it. But opportunities to grow and change exist for those who are as daring as they are lucky.

In this issue of *Pipeline*, we discuss transformation, both as a technical concept and a business model. We explore how digital transformation has and is changing the world, IoT is changing digital transformation, and how AI could change everything again. We also explore fraud risk prevention, examine the lifelines that exist for pay TV providers, celebrate texting’s 25th birthday, and talk about how we can protect vulnerable IP communications.

Enjoy.

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