

CES 2017 – Nigel Gwilliam's IPA Update

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RORY STEELE, ACCOUNT MANAGER - MEDIACOM EDINBURGH 08 MAR 2017

Recently Nigel Gwilliam, the IPA's emerging technology consultant, made the trip to MediaCom Edinburgh to update us all on his key takeaways from this year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas.

As Nigel was quick to point out, given the scale of CES 2017, there was a lot of chaff to wade through (though not all of it entirely irrelevant to the marketing world.) As technology progresses at an ever more daunting rate, products that were only a few years ago regarded as sci-fi jokes, are now commonplace on the show floor (think intelligent fridges and bedside lamps.) Indeed, the realm of science fiction is often fertile ground for predicting what may be awaiting us in the real world, in a few years' time.

Once he had finished working his way through the top chaff items (vibrating pants,

anyone?) he moved onto areas that were potentially of more import for those in the marketing industry. For example, the rollout of 5G (don't get too excited, we won't be taking advantage of super-fast WIFI until at least 2020) and also the increased use of automated cars.

One thing that did strike a particular chord, as someone with their marketing background focused on media planning, and with a particular emphasis on outdoor and radio, was the potential impact that these robo-cars will have on our media landscape. Given that roadside is a hugely important arena for outdoor media owners, what kind of impact will driverless cars have on this part of the media estate, given that soon there will almost certainly be no need for the cargo (that's us!) to look out the window while being driven from A to B.

Equally, the most valuable dayparts to buy on commercial radio stations are the morning and afternoon drive-times. Assuming that the robo-cars themselves won't have a hugely pressing desire (should that be directive?) to listen to the radio while transporting their cargo, how desirable will these dayparts become once driverless cars are the norm?

While technology continues its inexorable expansion into more and more facets of our daily lives, we do need to consider the effect that it has on our media landscape, as this will directly affect how we respond to client briefs. What might be a perfectly sensible and suitable response in 2017, may be totally irrelevant in a few years' time. The above is by no means meant to imply that all media planners will be out of a job by 2025 (I suspect that as one media platform becomes obsolete, another will conveniently spring into existence to take its place) – but one thing is for sure, that many of us are going to experience a dramatic and unprecedented paradigm shift in the way we conduct our professional business in the coming years, and there's very little we can do about it apart from embrace it.

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