

Blog Post

Ten years of the iPhone — where are we now?

Back in 2007, we had no idea what the technology landscape would look like a decade later. In 2017, a senior technology executive talks about how much things have changed

Executive summary

A senior executive of backup and recovery provider Veeam muses on the technologies that have emerged and changed life, leisure and business on the 10th anniversary of Apple's iPhone.

Client:

Zeno Group

Content type:

Blog post

Brief:

To ghost write a first person account of how much the technology landscape has changed to fit a client brief of 'digital transformation'.

Deliverable:

Punchy written piece about the tech that's changed our lives since the introduction of the Apple iPhone.

It seems like, as most of the planet, I was waiting for Apple's big announcement last month with baited breath. My iPhone is (almost) my life... it sounds sad, but due to the amount I travel, that little device is the one thing that keeps me on track and in touch with everyone. Now that the dust from the announcement has settled, and everyone knows to say ten instead of X, I can honestly say that I believe Apple has again moved us all forward with the iPhone X, 8 and 8 Plus.

It also got me thinking...celebrating a decade since the iPhone first entered our lives, what other technologies have impacted us in this time? It [the iPhone] not only ushered in a new age of consumer engagement with the possibilities data offers, it opened the door to other worlds that are similarly transforming our lives, work and society.

How? We were probably all taught 'stranger danger' as kids, but now we step into strangers' cars using Uber or date using Tinder without a second thought, entrusting our safety to the power of digital systems and data.

This world can only work because of the hyper-connectivity of today's systems, whether it's contacts, tweets, sales figures, email and so much more. Disparate systems must speak to each other constantly and securely to unleash new opportunities, which at Veeam, is something we're all about.

Inspired by how my own life has come to depend on the availability of data that resides on the apps hosted on my phone, my laptop and the various public clouds we use to store and access data, here's my unofficial top ten (in no particular order) of what technology I think have shaken things up for us over the past decade.

Cloud computing

As the early web giants like Google and Facebook built so many servers, they created an industry to host and compute data on our behalf. Worldwide, public cloud services market is set to reach US\$246.8 billion this year. From private, public and now, hybrid, the sky is the limit with how cloud computing will come to shape where and how data is stored, protected and accessed.

3D printing

Industrial additive manufacturing has been around since the 1980s, and the consumer field is still mostly about polymer desk toys, but keep watching. The easy shareability of files to print spare parts and new materials will transform the long tail economy.

Big Data

The online era saw us producing more information than we could possibly synthesize. Trends and insight abound if you know where to look, and big data analysis is helping us see patterns of consumer behavior, weather and more in finer detail than ever. With more than a quarter of a million customers using our Availability solutions, it's a market Veeam is leading.

Wearables/cybernetics

We're not quite replacing our hearts with digitalized pumps yet, but pedometers that match data with our diet and navigation chips to help keep track of Alzheimer's patients are commonplace, and advances in body-computer interfaces promise even deeper synergy.

The Internet of Things

It's a world where everything has data-collecting sensors attached – from TVs to trains and cars to crops. Going hand in hand with Big Data, all those devices (according to Gartner, the number of connected 'things' being used worldwide this year amounts to 8.4 billion and this will reach 20.4 billion by 2020) can show us how to run the world more efficiently, cheaply and safer than ever.

Artificial Intelligence

Also growing on the back of Big Data, there's just too much stuff for human users to sift through and express meaningfully. Computers can do it for us, but only if we teach them to behave more like humans, which are wired to extract meaning out of patterns rather than just remember everything.

Social media

Where the website/dotcom era still imposed a barrier to entry, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. gave everyone a voice online, the cumulative effect of which can change industries, political systems, opinions and cultures.

Dematerialised world

Instead of building lots of new, expensive machinery, we're wiring and connecting the machinery we already have, extracting more value than ever through innovations in the underlying software. In the Western world, investment in hardware has been declining to the same degree software has been growing.

Targeted marketing

Today advertisers have tools which their TV-ad-and-door-to-door-survey-wielding forebears barely dreamed of. Every link, post and 'like' forms a digital paper trail about you that's part of a whole other online economy worth billions, and one social media is only expanding even further.

Security awareness

Security used to mean locking the front door. Today, informed consumers are keenly aware how much they're tracked online (to say nothing of the myriad of cyber threats). It's not only made us all aware of security around passwords and logins, it's spawned a consumer cybersecurity industry that's almost as big as the internet itself.

So what does that mean? For us at Veeam, we're watching everyone closely to see how they'll disrupt or enrich today's Always-On world. 2007 marked the beginning of an evolution – maybe a revolution - and its gathering pace. Data is undoubtedly the new currency and without constant, uninterrupted access to it, we lose all the niceties we have grown to be so reliant on. My congratulations and thanks to Apple – what a stellar 10 years it's been for all involved in their success! I'm looking forward to the next ten, or is that X, no, it's ten.

What about you? What do you think the next ten years will bring? What's in your top ten of technologies that have come to the fore over the past decade? ■