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The Next Decade of Digital Entertainment | NextView Ventures

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5-6 minutes

Certain areas of the [Everyday Economy](#), such as [home](#) and [food](#), have been largely insulated from the internet and other technological forces. But one aspect of our daily lives has already changed dramatically since the dawn of the internet: how we are entertained.

We now take for granted technologies that fairly recently seemed like far-off predictions, such as [affordable and ubiquitous broadband along with smartphone penetration](#). These types of foundational technologies have catalyzed radical shifts in how we create, discover, and consume existing media types for entertaining ourselves.

For example, on-demand [in the cloud access to the world's entire music library for \\$10/mo](#) is an almost unthinkable shift from the previous generation of physical CDs purchased and stored inside a rack in the living room. Similarly profound is the ability to watch cinematic-quality video on your phone while waiting in line at the grocery. And despite some [challenges](#) like fake news, the democratization of publishing has empowered a nearly unpredictable explosion of content creators outside Hollywood resulting in entirely new media types. Even the term “social media” itself [was barely in our lexicon a decade ago](#), and now [Facebook has 93% penetration](#) in adults.

What's Next for Entertainment?

Our view at [NextView Ventures](#) is that this transformation in entertainment *is nowhere near its plateau*. As the very definition of what is “media” itself evolves with new platforms, the resulting way that we spend our time and money being entertained will continue to change with it. In particular, we are thinking about a few specific opportunities.

Voice-Enabled Services

There have already been [tens of millions of Amazon Alexa-powered devices sold in the U.S.](#) Combined with Amazon's “[Alexa-everywhere strategy](#)” to embed their voice computing platform in third-party hardware, along with the budding competition from rivals ([Google](#), [Samsung](#), [Microsoft](#), and [Facebook](#)), soon many homes will have a connected microphone in every room in the house, creating an always-present voice-directed ubiquitous computing layer.

Consumers employing humanity's most natural user interface [creates a new paradigm of personal voice computing](#). Many of the use-cases to date have been utilitarian (e.g. opening the connected garage door with voice), but even many of those functional applications affect how we're entertained (voice control of music, reading a recipe to you when cooking, or chatting with friends on the [Amazon Show](#)). Anytime we see new platform shifts, gaming is often an initial killer app, and that may [prove to be the case with voice](#), too. But where voice is most likely to affect entertainment is in a new genre that's outside our current mental framework, just as the personal computer changed how we even conceived of being entertained.

Future of Gaming

Voice isn't the only platform through which gaming will evolve. We're seeing [the rise of esports](#) elevating from merely a category of entertainment to [becoming something of Olympic proportions](#).

NextView's interest in gaming isn't to invest in specific games per se, but also to the enabling-layer technologies that make them happen. For example, our firm is an investor in [Fig](#), a crowdfunding platform for video games with a model that combines individual backing with rewards and the opportunity for non-accredited investors to invest in obtaining a share of future revenues. We've also

backed [Parsec](#), lowest-latency streaming software empowering gamers to play PC games on any device via the cloud. The team at NextView believes that as the types of modality of gaming broadens, so does the opportunity for venture-backed startups to prosper in the ecosystem.

The Next Generation of Media

What “is” media is also dramatically expanding. As ebooks have supplanted printed books, NextView portfolio company [BookBub](#) has led over 15 million readers in discovering new titles and authors. Similarly, as the consumption of news has become a mobile-first experience, we recently invested in [The Outline](#), which bills itself as “is a new kind of publication for a new kind of human,” creating both content and advertising pieces that are unabashedly mobile-centric. It is that latter monetization piece that drives media production, and our investment in [Triple Lift](#), the leader in programmatic native marketing technology, facilitates revenue streams of literally thousands of media properties across the web.

All of these new layers — from discovery to monetization, to the media itself — will need to be created (most likely by startups) as we venture into new platforms like true internet television, AR/VR, and whatever is beyond.

Entertainment is an essential part of our everyday lives, in terms of how we spend our time and our money. Americans spend [nearly six hours per day in some type of leisure](#), and nearly all aspects of that entertainment increasingly has a digital component, even [traditionally offline activities](#). Startups have an incredible opportunity to disrupt, change, and invent both the enabling-layer and the consumer apps that fuel our entertainment lives — and we’re excited to support them in those endeavors.