

**Title:**

Technology Predictions for 2006 and Reflections on 2005

**Word Count:**

993

**Summary:**

2005 literally took the world by storm. The tragedies of the Asian Tsunami, the Hurricanes that blew through the US Gulf Coast and the earthquakes that swallowed parts of Pakistan have left an indelible mark on 2005. While mother nature cast a shadow on 2005, it was technology that delivered the impact that resulted in a huge outpouring of donations. The world was touched by the human element seen real-time in pictures and videos. Today's technology was able to deliver the graphical grittiness t

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**Article Body:**

2005 literally took the world by storm. The tragedies of the Asian Tsunami, the Hurricanes that blew through the US Gulf Coast and the earthquakes that swallowed parts of Pakistan have left an indelible mark on 2005. While mother nature cast a shadow on 2005, it was technology that delivered the impact that resulted in a huge outpouring of donations. The world was touched by the human element seen real-time in pictures and videos. Today's technology was able to deliver the graphical grittiness that portrayed the nightmares occurring half a world away.

Technology is usually thought of as impersonal, but something needs to be recognized; without technology the personal elements of the 2005 tragedies would not likely have been conveyed to the extent and timeliness they were. Reflecting on 2005 and looking forward to 2006, technology will undoubtedly continue play a significant role in the future both on a personal and impersonal level.

In 2005 Blogs gave birth to splogs, where senseless web scrapers generated massive amounts of senseless content. Spam reached a whole new level, right along side the ethical debate of content scraping. Copyrights have been stepped on and I foresee a new host of tools that will emerge to protect content.

SPAM and phishing scams were easier to recognize, but to their credit, spammers

showed off their creativity, finding additional channels to inundate. From splogs to forum spam, 2005 tech users saw spam as one of life's continued annoyances. Looking into a crystal ball, I fear that social bookmarking will become the spam vehicle of 2006, weakening the value of a collective voice.

Sadly the blog saturation has resulted in web clutter. Due to increased competition and vast quantities of blogs on free hosted blog networks services, bloggers competing for audiences and web traffic will result in significant abandoned content, cluttering the web with useless ramblings. The ease of blogging that resulted in saturation will be its downfall. Credibility will again become important. Journalist, who have suffered from the blogosphere in 2005, will have a reprieve as credibility becomes an issue for bloggers. In 2006 web surfers are going to look for multiple sources to confirm facts, and rely on reliable respected sources, community content, and collaboration like Wikipedia is going to suffer and become less relevant in 2006. While Wikipedia scores well in search, it does not perform as well with accuracy. The Wikipedia community is haunted by spam and like DMOZ, it's success will be its downfall. The relevance of successful community wiki's will fade in 2006.

Cell phones have become personal homing devices, and it is near impossible to locate a cellular phone that is not capable of manipulating or taking photos, videos, graphics and text messages in addition to the traditional voice calls. It is likely the PDA will become extinct in 2006, as travelers move to a single multifunction device. In 2007 MP3 players will likely be a common feature of cell phones.

Wireless growth is still worth noting, as it has moved from hotspots, to hot zones, to hot cities. Philadelphia and San Francisco are leading the way as wireless cities in 2006.

What is in store for 2006? Privacy is a hot topic that is not going to disappear. Google and the US Government are battling a Big Brother image. Data mining has made the collection of data meaningful. Anti-Google sentiment is growing. Google has fallen from grace, while Google has made friends on Wall Street, it has disappointed surfers who have turned to Yahoo and MSN in growing numbers. 2006 will likely result heat up the search engine war with MSN and Yahoo scrambling for marketshare and Google walking a tightrope with privacy advocates on one end and monopoly theorists on the other end.

Google wants to make money, and like it or not data, is a commodity. Google will likely use the data from their various ventures to develop new technologies and personalize content. Conspiracy theorists believe that the Google's aggregate data will also be used to optimize the fees charged for pay-per-click, influence

organic ranking, or worse yet, sold.

Google's growth will continue to motivate privacy advocates and those in the technology field behind the Attention Truste movement, to work together, to improve how personal information and subscription information is used online. I expect we will see a lot of energy and effort in this area.

Personalized content will be a buzz word for 2006. Whether it is users selecting Podcasts, iTunes, or purchasing Amazon recommendations the web is learning how to cater content based on user selections and choices. Web surfers see personalized content as regaining control of what they want to watch, see, or listen to. From Tivo to podcasting, users are taking back control. Yet when the web serves content that is based on past surfing habits, who is really in control?

In 2005, marketers were told in no uncertain terms, if they are not using syndication and RSS, they will not survive. Well, they have one more chance to get it right. In 2006, marketers must use RSS as an alternative communication channel. It will no longer be cutting edge, it will be a must to survive. Web surfers no longer expect to provide personal information (an email address) for marketing materials, they expect to have a choice about how they wish to receive the content.

Vendors selling through affiliate programs lost ground in 2005. Publishers found the easy money of pay-per-click advertising not fraught with the inherent problems of affiliate tracking and cookie-killers. The increase in click-fraud and content scraping on AdSense sites will even the playing field and make affiliate programs more attractive in 2006.

The world is getting smaller, and technological advancements has not only brought us tragedy, but also has opened doors and the global market is now a viable option for small businesses. I believe the globalization trend will continue in 2006.

Top 10 Winners Predicted for 2006:

Cyber Security

VOIP

Attention Data

RSS/Syndication

Copyprotection

Credibility

Privacy

Alternative Energy (reusable fuel, clean energy)

Content Filtering

VideoTunes (iTunes with Video)

Permissions:

Permissions and notification of use not required.