

# Flash forward

## What's next? Predictions for 2010 and beyond.

2009 was a challenging year. But it was also exciting, with advancements in media consumption and technology, as well as a meteoric rise in Social Media.

2010 promises to be just as exciting. Here are the key things we think marketers and organisations need to consider, or get involved with, over the next twelve months.



## Digital will be at the heart of every organisation

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Businesses will look beyond digital as a communications tool, as it becomes an integral part of their business (not just marketing) infrastructure. This will be enhanced by a shift from awareness and acquisition drives, to customer loyalty and retention. As such, organisations will need work with their agencies to develop a digital business strategy that delivers superior customer engagement across all digital touch-points and makes digital integral to the organisation.

2010 will see an increase in the e-enabling of services and a rapid growth in real-time customer interaction. For example, customer engagement using live chat will begin to gain real traction, as organisations integrate call centres and customer service desks into their digital infrastructure.

Digital isn't 'coming'. It's here, and it's part of everything, or at least it will be.

## Mobile comes of age... at last

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After a series of false starts, 2010 really will be the year of mobile, with mobile browsing and mobile applications emerging as a powerful force amongst customers. This will have a significant impact on the design of web sites, as they accommodate the different needs of mobile users.

The mobile app will add another dimension to mobile communications, offering quick and easy access to valuable services or entertainment on demand.

The key to comms will be getting into the mind-set of the mobile user - what makes them tick when they interact with their device? What do they want? What do they expect? How can you add value to their life? And remember, just because it's a 'mobile', it doesn't necessarily mean they're on the move.



## Content: everybody's talking about it

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2010 will see a much greater focus on content in 2010, driven by two key factors:

Businesses will begin to embrace the use of video in their communications, both in a corporate and a campaign context. We will also see a greater demand for portable content, as companies develop assets that will live not just on their own site but offsite within the wider Internet such as social media networks and news sites. This will not be without its challenges, but get it right and your brand will extend way beyond its current confines.

## Cloud control: living life in the cloud

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The 'next big thing' in 2009, the Cloud and Cloud based thinking is about to spill over into the non-technical world. 2010 will see the start of innovative solutions to manage our new life; digital agencies have a perfect opportunity to grab a real problem that needs a real solution. So let's look forward to some really creative and innovative solutions.

### ▼ What is cloud technology?

Cloud is a technology term for software and computing services provided through the Internet. Organisations with cloud based offerings pool their computing and software resources to offer services to business and consumers through the internet. Such solutions provide economies of scale and enable expertise to be shared amongst lots of customers.

## Web watching: the importance of online monitoring

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In 2010, we'll see an increase in companies adopting the standard practice of listening to their customers, which will become even easier with the introduction of more filtering and sentiment tools, meaning the most relevant comments will be immediately recognisable.

As search engines embrace social networks, there will also be increased emphasis on managing reputation in real-time.

This makes online PR a centre-point, because customers' opinions can no longer be ignored. The importance of building independent brand advocates, and positioning employees in roles to manage this constant stream of comments, will become essential to ensure search results remain positive 24 hours a day.

## Social gets strategic

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Companies will begin to establish strong strategic frameworks in which to execute Social Media activities.

This will involve setting up internal cross-discipline teams comprising, at the very least, marketing, PR and legal. These teams will be responsible for establishing the policies and infrastructure that will govern how the business participates in Social Media – tone of voice, who responds, legal workflow and so on...

Agencies will continue to have much to offer in this evolving landscape, but this should not replace taking responsibility within the business and, crucially, as a business, not just as a marketing department.

## A new corporate journalism

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Before the Internet, the 'corporation' used to talk about itself in the press, the mainstream media, even in the corridors of Whitehall on a touch-point by touch-point basis. However, the corporate brand is now an 'always on' entity, which can be accessed at any time and in any place. In addition, the rise of video, growth of mobile applications and other technology advancements are transforming not just what we communicate, but how.

This means corporations will need to ensure that they represent themselves through all digital channels and be part of the ongoing dialogue about their business and the subjects that are important to them.

## Browsing: any time, any place, anywhere... any how

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Today's browsing experience is usually constrained to a 2D window within our chosen operating system. But we're surrounded by far richer opportunities. Higher bandwidth capability, multi-touch devices, higher resolutions and improved interactivity will start to push the design concepts of web-based solutions.

2010 will start to see the browser offer more depth and media convergence, combining video, audio, images, text-based content, and community. Interface technology will see further innovation as iptv set-top browsing, mobile and multi-touch devices gain momentum with consumers.

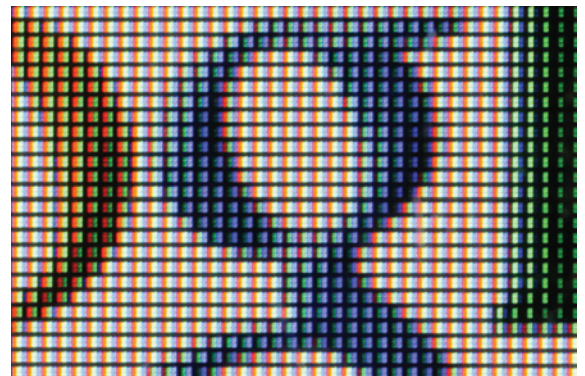
Convergence between media and the type of devices available in the digital home will challenge current browsing conventions.

## Search and conversion optimisation continues to advance

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2010 will be another big year for search, as many of the technologies that have emerged over the last few years become standard practice for online marketers. These included user experience and conversion analysis and optimisation platforms, engagement mapping and attribution modelling software.

This means marketers will no longer focus on only final click when determining which forms of online advertising deliver results cost effectively, allowing advertising channels to influence users earlier in the buying cycle.



### Key search trends for 2010 ▶

- Continued growth of real-time search
- Online brands will branch out into international/multilingual search
- Mobile search will take hold
- Google's 'Caffeine' algorithm (due early in 2010) will place emphasis on context and sentiment
- Mass adoption of microformats as means of semantically labelling web content

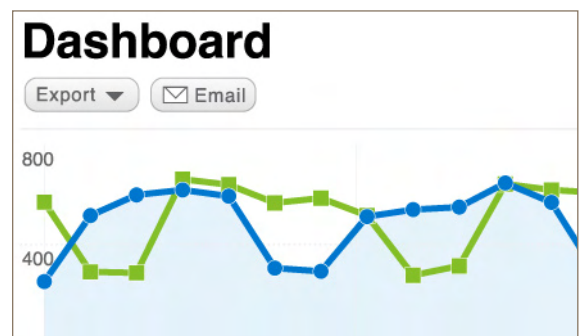
## Analytics grows up

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2010 will see the maturing of analytics in two different ways.

The first is about how analytics data is used in a business and - shock, horror - this isn't about the technology. There has to be a rationalisation of data and metrics to get to a point where a clear dashboard of useful information is available, and not just to marketing teams, but to customer service, front line operations etc.

The second change will be the increasing sophistication of software available to deliver behavioural marketing solutions. For example, software will create algorithms built by analysing the way people use your site and will deliver content and services at the right time in the decision-making process.



To speak to someone about how Amaze can help your organisation exploit key opportunities in 2010:

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