

## Next-Gen Tech: Virtual Reality and More

Jeremy Lockhorn, October 2008

There is a profound change happening in the way we interact with technology, and it has nothing to do with the web. Or at least nothing to do with the PC. Or rather, nothing to do with the PC as we know it.

*Minority Report* generated all kinds of buzz when it first came out – for both the gestural computing interface and the portrayal of extreme personalization of the advertising. The movie set forth a vision for what the future of computing might look like, and has been referenced by futurists more than once since its release. But something funny has been going recently, as I swear I've heard more mentions of the movie over the last 6 months than I had heard in the previous 6 years since its release.

Clearly, it's got something to do with rapid growth and advancement of both digital out of home and new computing interfaces ranging from Microsoft Surface to Apple's iPhone. These devices, along with the Wiimote and others are radically reinventing the way that people interact with digital technologies. Equally as important, and perhaps even more remarkable, is the shocking changes already happening in the way that digital technologies interact with us. This is not a new topic for me – [I've written about this new generation of "convergence" before](#). But the buzz continues, and the parade of incredibly cool and inspiring examples marches along as well. So I figured I would share a few of the best that have come through my inbox recently:

### Johnny Lee's Wiimote hacks

[This one](#) has likely made the rounds already, but it's simply remarkable what he's able to do with a \$40 remote and a little ingenuity. Johnny Lee became a YouTube celebrity with his video showing a simple multi-touch interface leveraging the Wiimote. The Ted demos take it to a whole other level. Be sure to check out the link to full bio and more links.

### Virtual Reality at home?

A Seattle-based company called TN Games has been working on ways to bridge the gap between the real world and the virtual world. They've released a vest and are working on a [helmet](#) that promises to let gamers – and I quote from their site -- "experience the physical consequences of [their] actions in the virtual world!" If the Wiimote is a remarkable piece of technology that has made gesture-based control of computing interfaces mass market, do TN Games and others like it stand to bring Virtual Reality to the masses as well?

## Ultrasound makes the virtual feel real

I found this one on PSFK. Basically, the idea is that scientists have figured out a way to control sonic waves so precisely that they can simulate the sensation of touching an object that's not actually physically there. As PSFK writer Dan Gould notes, audio and visuals are already incredibly realistic in virtual reality and gaming environments, and this sort of force feedback brings a whole new dimension. Having just bought a copy of EA's NHL 2009, I am fearful of the day I will be sitting on the couch yet might actually feel a crushing [Zdeno Chara](#) body check. Good times. PSFK post includes link to BBC story.

## Monsters invade Tokyo Bay!

A received [this link](#) from a colleague and subsequently found [this one](#) covering the same project. This was evidently part of a promotion for an upcoming movie release. A very cool 3-d looking projection that used finely sprayed water as its screen. Like the examples above, it begins to foretell a future in which we don't need screens to deliver digital experiences.

## Augmented Reality Demo

I discovered [this one](#) via David Polinchock's excellent blog – it's a very cool demonstration of how the mashing-up of the real world and computer-generated data is reinventing even simple gameplay. Just imagine what this could do for a print ad, or an out of home ad.

The pace of change here and the implications for the future of computing and marketing are at once frightening and exciting. Opportunities abound, and despite economic concerns, it's a great time to be in this space.

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<http://www.clickz.com/showPage.html?page=3631072>*

## About the Author



Jeremy is an emerging media expert at Razorfish where he is also a key leader of the agency's emerging media practice. The team functions as both a think-tank on next-generation media and an extension of current client teams and is focused on driving innovative marketing solutions for clients. As the marketing landscape continues to fragment and new channels emerge, Jeremy functions as a filter and consultant – helping clients and internal teams to understand, evaluate and roll out strategic pilot programs and analyze the results in an effort to fuel future efforts and broader campaigns. He helps teams take a core idea and extend it to new digital environments, building connections with target audiences in unexpected, yet efficient, ways. This approach goes beyond campaigns; it translates to powerful digital solutions that can transform businesses. While his expertise covers numerous emerging media technologies, his primary focus is on video across all platforms. Jeremy's efforts to research and assess the landscape ultimately feed global strategy development and uncover unique opportunities for innovative campaigns.

Jeremy is a 15-year advertising industry veteran, having spent time at offline and direct marketing agencies before joining Philadelphia-based digital agency startup i-FRONTIER in 1997 as its first employee. He teamed with founder Brad Aronson to grow the business and ultimately join forces with Razorfish. During his tenure at the agency, he has served many roles, but they all meet at the intersection of media, creative insights and technology.

He is a frequent speaker on emerging media, having presented at OMMA Video, Digital Hollywood, Streaming Media East and West, CES, Internet Retailer, the AAAA Media Conference and several others. Jeremy also writes a monthly column for online magazine ClickZ (<http://clickz.com/showPage.html?page=3622705>) and regularly publishes whitepapers on a broad range of emerging media topics (<http://www.avenuea-razorfish.com/points>).

Jeremy holds a BSJ in Advertising Management from Ohio University's Scripps School of Journalism, and is currently based at agency headquarters in Seattle, WA.

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