Poking fun at what we don't know or understand

By Graham Deneys , issued by Dentsu   16 Jan 2023

As we move into 2023, I cannot help but notice how the conversation around technology has started to swing. There are several posts poking fun at tech-based concepts and theories that have been introduced over the last while - elements that we at first seemed rather excited about.

Graham Deneys, chief strategy officer of Dentsu Media Brands

Web3, NFT's, crypto and of course, the metaverse are just a few. When first introduced, some were embraced, and some were avoided, but there appeared to be a general nervous enthusiasm across the board as we wondered how these technologies could be utilised within our present ecosystem. Dare I say, there was an air of opportunity.

A key issue however was that we did not really know what and or how to use any of these New-Kids-on-the-Block within existing parameters. There was no guidebook, no rules. There were some innovative use cases, but these were seen more as short-term plays. There were a few experts, but they were also few and far between.

As time passed, and it became evident that the tech was not easy to integrate into existing structures or scale in any meaningful way, the adoption curve started to decline.

We eventually reached an all too familiar critical point when enough people began to see these developments negatively due to their limited adoption and superficial usage. People then developed the confidence to toss it aside or ridicule the tech. We eventually reached a point of collective and comfortable disdain as we were now confident that we would be met with agreement when we also threw our stones. We became the expert mass without truly understanding the potential of what could be.

Whilst it is important to investigate all new elements critically, we seem to have found it easier and more comfortable to ridicule as a comfortable collective rather than to embrace the fact that these new things could be incredible works in progress. All these developments could potentially be part of something so much bigger - potential cogs in a future-shaping machine that could redefine our entire media ecosystem.

It reminds me of another curve known as the Dunning Kruger Effect, whereby knowledge is often outdone by perceived knowledge and when enough "expert" noise is created it will probably drown out any actual experts or interesting use cases to begin with.

In our case, the technology is presently up against the power of the nay-saying collective. I am not saying that this nay saying collective isn't knowledgeable in general, but rather that there isn't enough information yet for a critical mass to really be knowledgeable.

To this point, are we taking the risk of tossing something aside because that's what everyone else is saying? Could these "shiny new distractions" be building blocks when you look at them outside of the use cases currently generated?

When we look at them in isolation, they might seem a little short on immediate relevance - NFT and the art scene for example, but when you take a step back and try to envisage how these technologies could fit into a broader issue or scenario you might have a slightly different outlook.

Everyone is presently talking about ChatGPT, and all focus is on how it could replace Google. The key however is to resist the urge to silo the tech into a Google replacement. The actual opportunity is in understanding its potential to enhance other tech and services - creating an entirely new offering.

If we only consider the tech as a Google competitor, well then, it's usage will always be measured against that exact KPI, until such time as we all get a bit bored, and the mass ridicule starts again.

If we choose to write off new innovations just because siloed usage cases and subsequent mass adoption has not materialised, we are missing a point even looking at it from the wrong angle to start with.

NFT's are not the answer they are just a manifestation of an underlying technology, a singular output within a greater movement in tech. The metaverse is a weird and awkward phenomenon but could it be useful? Yes definitely, we just haven't worked out how. It is presently being touted as a new way to interact with each other, but could it be something else and not just a rather uncomfortable place to hang out with friends? We appear to be reaching a chuckling crescendo for the rollercoaster that is crypto and blockchain right now, but should we be? I am sure there were scores of people rolling on the floor when a few so-called experts said computers were going to talk to each other.

I guess what I am trying to say is, what is the point of laughing? Yes, it probably makes us feel better as a collective, but it certainly doesn't help progression or inspire others to potentially connect the dots where we could not.

The Wright brothers crashed many times before take-off and each version they made looked ridiculous, until one day everyone looked up and said, "so that's what they were aiming for."
Perhaps these new visitors should be lauded as valuable progression points screaming for us to take hold and build on, as opposed to isolated fads that people "fell for".

Dentsu

Dentsu is the network designed for what's next, helping clients predict and plan for disruptive future opportunities in the sustainable economy. Taking a people-cantered approach to business transformation, dentsu combines Japanese innovation with a diverse, global perspective to drive client growth and to shape society.

Profile | News | Contact | Twitter | Facebook | RSS Feed

For more, visit: https://www.bizcommunity.com