

Ornico's trend forecast for 2012

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A leap year that starts on Sunday, 1 January 2012, is of course the year in which the hopeful and the more glass-half-empty have earmarked for profound change. The more apocalyptic amongst us have earmarked 2012 as the year the world is going to end based on the Mayan or Mesoamerican Long Count calendar which ends abruptly next year. Fortunately scientists have declared these ominous omens a load of hogwash.

What can be counted on is Ornico's trend forecast for 2012. A brand and reputation research company, Ornico monitors, analyses and reports on advertising and editorial that affects consumer perceptions of brands. Because of the vast tracking it does in the media and advertising space, Ornico keeps a close eye on the consumer behaviours that have played out in 2011 and offers an outlook on those trends that will shape our world in 2012.

Android - the new 800kg market gorilla

The word on the street to Apple is: "Be afraid. Be very afraid." Android is the new gorilla on the block and is surging in terms of growth numbers, and is catching up to Apple faster than one can say the word "smartphone". [Research group Gartner](#) shows that Android is simply running away with global market share. Figures for November 2011 show that Android's worldwide market share of smartphones for the second last quarter of 2011 stood at 52.3% according to Gartner.

Android's not just winning in the smartphone numbers, but the operating platform is seeing radical growth in the apps market. The [Android market contains some 320,000 apps](#) compared to the 450,000 available in Apple's App store. What's crucial to remember is that Android only had 2.8% share of the smartphone market in 2009. Android's growth on mobile will continue to surge in 2012 but unfortunately the same won't be said of tablet devices. The iPad will still remain the king of the hill until hardware developers are able to come up with an Android tablet device that is as slick as a smartphone. Currently Android tablets aren't anywhere near as functional as iPads, and there's unlikely to be a significant breakthrough in 2012, although this is on the near horizon.

Smartphones are everywhere in emerging markets

There was a time when smartphones were the preserve of the elite or those people with money. That's no longer the case as the price point of smartphones become ever more affordable and with manufacturers creating affordable devices for emerging markets. A case in point is [Chinese handset company Huawei](#), which has its eyes set on Africa in general and South Africa in particular and wants to give RIM, who own BlackBerry, a run for their money. Orange, the mobile phone operator owned by France Télécom, is also set to enter the fray and recently launched a cheap 'Facebook phone' for Africa.

Competition in the smartphone market will push the price of these devices down as manufacturers compete for this market, so expect to see smartphones becoming the mainstay. "What the proliferation of smartphones in South Africa and the rest of the continent is going to do is push up connectivity and create a lot more opportunity for developers working in the mobile and apps markets. It's exciting times given that smartphones are going to become more affordable and accessible," says Oresti Patricios, CEO of Ornico.

The app economy is here, and it's being branded

"We've known for some time now that the app economy is in full swing, but 2012 will see this broaden as brands and entrepreneurs participate more fully in this marketplace," says Patricios. The CEO of Ornico says that mobile applications have gone mainstream during the past few years, but that the proliferation of smartphones in emerging markets will fuel the

development of apps in these markets, and the massive reach brands have through apps now means that branding applications will be another way for advertisers to extend reach and to create relationships with consumers.

Eish! Hard times for generalist newspapers

Print media continued to struggle in 2011, and 2012 will be no different. "The Audit Bureau of Circulations showed that newspapers continued to bleed in 2011 and next year will be no different," says Patricios. "There are of course niche exceptions like the *Mail & Guardian* which continues to do well. However news is increasingly become commoditised and people are looking for greater value from newspapers." The winners in this sector will be those who differentiate and cater to specific markets like *Mail & Guardian*, and news offerings catering specially for device markets like iMaverick, a more recent daily news offering for iPad users. However those titles that will win will be those that differentiate their device or online offering from their print title, and don't merely shove print content online but create separate but synergistic products that support each other.

Say hello to the revolutionary consumer

You can give thanks to AdBuster's Kalle Lasn for the birth of the 'occupy' movement which has seen protesters occupying landmarks in cities across the US and the world. Now that winter has arrived in the US the protest is moving into banks and other organisations that consumers are unsatisfied with. "Banks have earned the wrath of consumers in America because they helped cause the recession but are taking none of the responsibility and have been dependent on government bail outs," says Patricios. "What's interesting is to see how revolutionary consumers will demand their rights locally. Banking brands would do well to watch what's happening abroad and to understand how this trend might manifest in South Africa."

The changing capitalist conversation

The 'occupy' movement and the global recession have shown that capitalism is becoming an endangered species because it's failed humans across the world. People are unhappy with the rich becoming richer, and the poor getting nowhere. What's being called for globally is a conversation about capitalism and the reinvention of capitalism. Trends that will stem from this will include reinventions of capitalism, and brands that will innovate new forms of capitalism to endear themselves to consumers fed up with an economic system that's failed them.

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