

Is it time for a new (business) reality? Key tech predictions for 2017

 By [Jason Ried](#)

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Over the past year, technology has been glorified as the great business disruptor - with the ability to upend entire industries with just a few lines of well-crafted code.



We have seen 'traditional' corporate juggernauts like crystal maker [Swarovski reinvent themselves](#) as technology players, in an attempt to stay relevant. Without doubt, businesses that can effectively anticipate the technology tools and platforms that will have the greatest impact on the consumer will be best positioned to turn tech development into long-term, competitive advantage.

With this in mind, it is useful to take stock of the major developments that occurred in 2016, and also to peer into our high-def, 3D, 5G connected crystal ball (not the Swarovski kind)...

Virtual reality hits the shelves

Although we're only just scratching the surface of the immense potential offered up by virtual reality (VR), 2016 was undoubtedly the year in which VR entered the consumer environment in full force. With several of the tech bigwigs jumping into this emerging trend and releasing a wide spectrum of low and high-end devices (HTC Vive, Oculus Rift, PlayStation VR, Samsung Gear VR, Google Cardboard, Google Daydream View) the average consumer now has access to the fast evolving world of VR.

AR makes its major debut (Kind regards, Pokémon Go)

Courtesy of the global craze generated by Pokémon Go, a free-to-play, location-based augmented reality (AR) game, AR stepped out of its sci-fi shadow and firmly into the global spotlight. Having clocked up more than 100 million downloads in just a few weeks, Pokémon Go demonstrated the exciting (and addictive) possibilities of this technology, and has inspired major brands like Porsche to begin investing in its marketing capabilities.

Microsoft claws back

Under the guidance of its forward-thinking CEO, Satya Nadella, Microsoft began to make up some of the ground it has lost in recent years to its younger and more agile rivals. Notably, the company opened up its software to Apple and Android devices – thus allowing users to stay within the Microsoft ecosystem when shopping around for popular software and services from these devices.

In addition, the company released the HoloLens, a pair of ‘mixed reality’ head-mounted smartglasses that lead the way in terms of integrating AR into mainstream business applications.

Driverless cars move from fad to functional

With Tesla Motors at the front of the charge, driverless cars moved from a dreamy concept into a daily reality in 2016. In a recent statement, Tesla noted, “all Tesla vehicles produced in our factory – including Model 3 – will have the hardware needed for full self-driving capability at a safety level substantially greater than that of a human driver...” This move arguably marked the beginning of a new, highly digitised era in motor vehicle manufacturing.

Now back to that crystal ball...

Sony’s PlayStation VR (PSVR) will eat rivals for lunch

As competition to release the best VR gaming experience intensifies, we believe that Sony’s PSVR will quickly become the most popular VR device in 2017. The PSVR is accessibly priced, it’s backed by a legacy of sound hardware and it provides access to a growing library of compelling, high quality content.

Sony will be able to offer consumers the very best in VR games, and will lean on its well-oiled marketing machine to grow the biggest and most loyal user base. Once this happens, rival VR developers will be forced to explore other, non-gaming applications for VR – such as tourism and education – in order to compete with Sony’s gaming prowess.

Automatic navigation coming to a highway near you

Next year, driverless cars will become the norm as more of the major car manufacturers begin to offer automatic navigation. While many onlookers have sneered at Google for its early version driverless cars which have been considered unattractive, we think it may be moving towards creating a driverless car kit. If this is indeed the case, Google could be making a play to release a kit that can be used by any car manufacturer.

Bots will rule your online world

Bots, which are simply software applications that run automated tasks, will become a critical part of our daily interactions online. As people become more inclined to perform both their personal and business-related tasks in the digital sphere, bots will move from a ‘nice-to-have’ to a fundamental cog in every client or consumer facing business. While a small number of businesses may require more complex and sophisticated systems guided by AI, 2017 will be the year in which the average business uses bots to manage its regular, everyday tasks.

Apple Inc. will dive into augmented reality

It is notoriously difficult to predict what Apple Inc. is plotting, but there are strong indications that the company is about to make a major play with AR. This move will possibly be made with the release of its next iPhone, which could potentially include AR recognition and software as a built-in service.

While it is true that any predictions around Apple releases should be tinged with doubt, the increasingly blurred lines between hardware and software within AR development presents a unique opportunity for Apple to distinguish itself in an overcrowded smartphone market. And if they don't do it, someone else surely will.

ABOUT JASON RIED

Jason Ried is the founder and MD of Fuzzy Logic. Jason's vision for Fuzzy Logic is to create world-class games and apps while growing the games industry in South Africa which has a wealth of untapped potential and talent. To date, Jason has led Fuzzy Logic in releasing chart-topping products, winning an international award and starting work on a big budget, highly ambitious game for an international game and toy company.

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