



***In 2020, looking back on this decade, what will be the single most impactful technical advancement driving business growth?***

***What's your philosophy on maintaining a focus on innovation?***

***2010 - 2020: The Decade the Internet Grew Up™***

In 2020, the generation growing up with social media, rampant texting and cloud computing will be the entrepreneurs and business leaders driving technology's next great innovations.

So, what will be the water-shed technologies that will survive and drive the next decade?

The answer might depend on whom you ask. Futurists would likely point to the Internet and mobility/wireless communications and that's great - no one can deny the benefits that mobile communications and internetworking have provided in the past 25 years from 1985 - 2010.

However, if you are looking at the 10 year period between 2010 and 2020 and ask entrepreneurs, consumers, CxOs, investors as well as other business leaders across all major industry sectors, the answer will more likely be the quick and pervasive advent of *cloud computing*.

Sure, many folks will quip that cloud is just the next IT marketing buzz-term but if you dig a little deeper that sheen of marketing hype is actually based on a fundamental shift in the way data, process and collaboration are being delivered. From 2010 to 2010 the tip of the preverbal cloud ice-berg was seen through the haze of dot.com bombs and the rush to Internet business in the prior decade.

Moving forward, the period extending until 2020 might well be viewed as *The Decade the Internet Grew Up*™ and prove just how massive the cloud "berg" is under-the-surface. From infrastructure, to mobility, to virtualization, to on-demand applications the true value of cloud is making its presence known throughout the entire IT ecosystem.

This coming second generation of cloud computing is being referred to as Cloud 2.0™ and will be the period during which most cloud innovation will be cultivated. That said, an important question for entrepreneurs and emerging companies is, "How can I best leverage innovation while also bringing a strong value proposition to IT stakeholders?" The answer is not as straight-forward as it was before the advent of the Internet, social networks and cloud computing.

Traditional enterprise software models placed a premium on "up-front economics." Customers would spec-out infrastructure and user rosters and then contract for hardware and software upfront for 12 months at a minimum with hefty ongoing maintenance expenses.

The cloud model turns that on its side as it affords considerable flexibility for folks in both the IT and finance executive suites. Now, organizations can outsource infrastructure on a transactional or unit-of-cloud basis and can *Start Small ... and Scale*™ with regards to user onboarding and data migration. Vendors who realize the fact that cloud is an economic model more than a technical solution will reap the rewards.

Furthermore, cloud vendors who quickly move beyond basic Cloud1.0 offerings will also garner a premium in license fees and better multiples if strategic players come calling for M&A.

All-in-all it is once again very exciting times to be an information technology provider or consumer. Coming out of the worst economic downturn in two generations the landscape in all directions is fertile ground for innovation.

Looking into my crystal ball I see the decade from 2010 - 2020 inflecting upward considerably for opportunities in technology ranks across all industry sectors and a more mature Internet and

cloud ecosystem will be a primary driver.

Billions in early-stage and high-growth capital has been on the sidelines for quite some time and these investors are anxious and motivated to put that money to work for themselves and their general/limited partners. While disruptive offerings will always be attractive to risk-taker in the investor ranks, a back-to- basics approach has also settling into the psyche of venture investors.

As cloud vendors can make the leap from cultivating great ideas to delivering high-margin, high-value and profitable solutions with tangible results; this *Decade the Internet Grew Up* will be a fun place in which to exist - ENJOY THE RIDE!!

*This interview was published in [SIIA's Vision from the Top](#) , a Software Division publication released at [All About the Cloud](#) 2012.*