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## Still living in this world of exponential change

*By Jeff Patmore, head of strategic university research, BT*In 2007 I wrote an article: [Living in a world of exponential change](#).

In it I said that we would soon be reaching a point soon where anyone anywhere could access the internet and that this would allow people to communicate and share media from almost anywhere in the world.

I talked about the \$100 laptop and its disruptive effect on the laptop industry and I discussed the way the price of memory was reducing every year and how new technologies were helping us to share knowledge and information, both at work and with friends.

Much of the change we have seen is the realisation of Gordon Moore's 1965 prediction that the number of transistors that could be placed inexpensively on an integrated circuit would double every two years, this being closely linked to the processing power of the integrated circuit, or 'chip'.

He was confident that this would continue for at least ten years, however forty five years later Moore's law shows no sign of running out of steam. In 2010 we are around two cycles of this law further on from my original article, so how have things changed?

Today a USB drive costs around \$2 per gigabyte, down from \$10 in 2007. Facebook now has more than 500 million active users, that is people who access it at least once a day, up on 250 million in 2009 and 50 million in 2007. And of course we have the iPad which although only launched in May in the UK, is already having a major impact on how people use the internet and web.

In August CNN's Fortune website reported that '[Mobile Devices are overtaking PCs](#)', commenting on the market change happening in computing and how people are using their phones and pads to access media and communicate.

### Keeping in touch

But mobile computing and services which allow us to keep in touch and share knowledge and information require internet access and now in the UK we have the [BT Fon](#) service, which provides access to more than 1.5 million wi-fi points, across the country. Now we really can be connected almost anywhere.

But what does all this mean for our daily lives?

Ofcom published a report in August saying: The average person actually squeezes in the equivalent of nearly nine hours of media and communications each day, by multi-tasking on several devices. This is perhaps not true multi-tasking but people texting, browsing the web, e-mailing and online shopping, while watching the TV and chatting with friends.

For the first time in our history we are able to communicate effortlessly with our friends and colleagues anywhere in the world, either in real time, by messaging or via one of the many web 2.0 collaboration tools: blogs, wikis and social network updates. We can enjoy media with high quality video and superb stereo sound either at home or on the move and of course we can chat to friends about the content simultaneously, almost no matter where they are. And lastly we can immerse ourselves in games either with friends or in competition with a friendly computer.

Last week wired magazine proclaimed; '[The web is dead. Long live the internet](#)', explaining that there is a move to accessing much of our information through applications running on smart phones and tablets. Why? Because it's quicker and easier and means we can be 'connected' all the time.

### In an instant

I live with this technology every day and yet I still never cease to be amazed by it. The ability to sit in Cambridge and to chat to a friend sitting outside a cafe at the base of Mount Fuji in Japan and to see her smile on the screen of my laptop as we share a joke is now nothing special, but is still amazing. Taking a photograph and sharing it with friends around the world instantly, is something we now all take for granted, but it does not make it ordinary.

This extraordinary march forward of technology and services continues to gather in pace and our adoption of the best as part of our lives enhances what we can achieve. However the most powerful change is the ability to share our thoughts and for others to challenge or build on them, collaborating online with academics and business colleagues around the world has allowed us to develop new ideas and new services. Sir Isaac Newton noted: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."



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