

# **The Collision: Physical & Digital Realities**

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### Executive Summary

As digital technologies continue to infiltrate our daily lives we are continually connected and exposed to information and content around every turn, in every pocket, wherever we look. The infiltration of technology has in turn extended the opportunity to stay connected, whether voice, text, picture, video, or in person. These extensions have provided more opportunity for marketers to communicate with consumers on more of an intimate, personalized level.

As we'll see below, we are witnessing something so spectacular; so magnificent... a collision of worlds; a convergence of realities. We as humans are gaining superhuman strength and knowledge with the support of digital technologies through our physical realities. Now, as marketers, we need to understand how individuals are using these technologies and support with function or entertain with excitement.

### Physical Reality

Physical reality really needs no explanation. We all live it every day. It's our daily lifestyle or routines, like grocery shopping, running errands, eating, etc. It's also our exciting events like holidays, birthdays, parties, gatherings, ball games, etc. We all lead very different, very distinct lifestyles, as such; we all have a very different physical reality, one that we hold near and dear to our hearts or one that we desperately want to change. Either way, this reality is something that can cause many emotions; satisfaction, boredom, joy, excitement, frustration, etc. and has many implications to how we go about our days and how we set goals for our lives.

Our physical reality encapsulates two different types of activities:

**Things we must do:** This includes the daily errands, going to work to earn a living, shopping for groceries to have food to survive, shopping with a significant other while the big game is on, paying bills, etc. We do these to keep up our life and to keep moving forward. These activities can become annoying or frustrating if we don't enjoy them. We can easily get irritated by little things when participating in some of these activities.

**Things we want to do:** This is the real reason for living. These activities include ball games, little league games, parties, family gatherings (even though some might put this in "Things we must do"), concerts, travel, restoring old cars, play guitar, etc. These typically are our passions or hobbies. We never want these activities to end and we want to remember them for the rest of our lives. These are the moments we talk about with friends and say "Man, you should've been there." These moments, we look back on and cherish the time we had on this earth.

Our physical reality is a combination of our activities, interests, connections, emotions, people, hobbies, places, and things. We are all very different and have very distinct lifestyles. This fact alone makes it ludicrous that marketers continue to mass advertise and segment on a level above the individual.

### Digital Reality

So, what is reality when it comes to the digital world in which we live? Is it looming somewhere between a status update and a text? Maybe. Are we waiting for holograms and eye scanning augmented reality to take us by storm? Not quite.

All I know is that we are in a world where our digital lives are a key, important role in our real, physical lives. It enables us to become smarter, stronger; almost superhuman. So what is driving this mechanism of digital evolution?

**Digital:** As we continuously interact, we not only learn efficiencies to produce the best output, but the digital space itself is learning our behavior and reacting accordingly. As we continue to search, browse, and surf the interwebs we are continually providing much needed history and executions of our needs

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to allow the search and tracking Gods to give us the most relevant content necessary for the fulfillment of our needs. This learning mechanism is spanning multiple platforms and search algorithms to give us the most effective use of our Internet time.

The digital reality is that our individualized digital activity is becoming a driving force to our dependence on digital information in our physical, real lives.

**Social:** Social networks have allowed us to stay in touch with our friends, families, old acquaintances and even our favorite brands, organizations, news, or groups. But this shift has driven our need for content delivery and real time information. During breaking news, we turn to our social networks instead of turning on the TV. We long for the rhetoric our network has on an issue or situation. Coupling the semantics of the digital search with the real time access our social networks and social media provide, we are depending more and more on the most relevant content and information coming to us, where we are, when we want it.

Social has allowed us to redefine what it is to gather. Not only can we meet in person, or have a gathering with people physically with us, we now include others that can't be there physically. No longer is there a barrier for travel or long distance. We can completely include far off relationships in physical situations and events.

The social reality is that we are no longer dependant on looking for information, content, or relationships. They now find us based on our "opt-ins" and engagements; alleviating the trials and tribulations and time associated with search and relationship efforts.

**Mobile:** Tired of being strapped to your computer to fulfill your digital realty? Simply reach for your pocket. Mobile technologies and applications have given us the power of converging our digital lives with our physical, on-the-go, active lifestyles. Including semantic digital experience and social network capabilities, mobile devices give us the power to learn, interact, and engage with our favorite people, information, and news where ever we are in the world physically. Breaking down the barriers of the computer (whether mainframe or laptop), mobile connectivity empowers us as informed friends, family members, consumers, and advocates. No longer do we have to wait to tell people what we did, reach out for customer service, describe an event... just reach into our pocket and let it go.

This connectivity has shifted news sources. Each of us has the power. We are now the news; we are now the content creators and distributors. All we have to do is click and upload.

The mobile reality is the line between physical and digital is slowly blurring. The interactivity of 2d barcodes, visual identification software and location based services will empower us further in our physical life to interact with the beyond, in real time.

**Data:** How is all this amazing empowerment possible? What is the driving force behind real time and relevance? Data. Every interaction, every interest, every connection, every engagement... every aspect of our lives are being stored and used to provide us with the most relevant information needed to fulfill our requests in the shortest amounts of time. Based on our digital interactions, we can get real time recommendations for physical activities; find out where to eat, what bar has the best Bloody Mary, etc. Each of us become a glorified version of who we are... even though we may forget from time to time, our data keeps us reminded of our interests, likes, and relationships.

The reality of data is just that... reality. What defines us as individuals are our interests, interactions, engagements, experiences, and connections. The digital realm is just a repository of that information and catalyst for relevance and time.

Digital is becoming reality. It empowers us.

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### Collision of Digital and Physical

Looking at the Physical Reality in which we all live, we can see some events where digital events begin to affect. With the influx of mobile computing and connectivity, wi-fi capabilities, and social networking sites, we are becoming more and more connected through our physical life by our digital connections. As with the variance of each of our physical realities, so is the use and role digital capabilities play in those lives. With all the different roles digital may play in our lives, they can really be grouped into two strategic uses to fulfill the activities happening in our physical lifestyle.

**Empower Physical Reality:** These activities help us navigate more easily through certain events in our life. Where to buy dog food, get around a traffic jam, check the score on the game when shopping with your significant girlfriend, find a toilet close by, get restaurant reservations, find the lowest price on a product, get coupons when shopping, etc. These digital capabilities give us the power to perform mundane tasks easier.

**Enhance Physical Reality:** These activities help us enhance the things we like to do or the different experiences that we encounter. Having content and information at our fingertips and in our pockets allows us to connect with our family, friends, mentors, colleagues, etc. when we want, where we want, during real time experiences. It gives us the opportunity to build relationships and share experiences with friends. Imagine not being able to make it back for your kid's birthday party... Now with digital technologies like Skype and Qik, you can participate in the experience without physically being there. Imagine traveling to a foreign country and you don't know how to check into a hotel, the combination of mobile and digital technologies can empower you to speak conversationally to the native speaker.

Digital technologies are quickly changing the way we live; the way we approach life. It gives us power and strength that we have never had before. It makes us smarter, stronger, and more powerful; almost super human.

### The Collision

The digital reality is that it is now physical reality. The collision of the two worlds has created experiences that were once only dreamt of through science fiction. We are living a converged life and it is making us better people.

### What This Means to Marketers

The convergence of these worlds is quickly forcing marketers to think in many different ways than ever before.

**Personal Approach:** As we've seen over the past few years, social technologies have proved that mass communications aren't effective as they once were. We've had to shift our mindset towards personalized communications. The continued penetration of digital and mobile technologies are only going to further this shift. We need to align our brand message with a simple answer to two questions: How can we best empower our consumer to do tasks easier; how can we enhance their physical lives through these digital technologies?

**Dynamic Messaging:** Multiple touchpoints for consumers creates multiple entry points and multiple communication channels. Marketers need to provide a message that spans these touchpoints as well gives flexibility for the consumer to have more power and allow the brand to integrate into their personal lifestyle.

**Continued Engagement:** These multiple touchpoints also create an opportunity for conversations to become diluted, broken or ended prematurely. Marketers need to build and infrastructure with a

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combination of CRM platforms to allow the conversation a consumer has with a brand to continue through the lifetime of the relationship, building off each interaction and growing with each and every consumer.

**Physical Mapping:** With the messaging and infrastructure in place, brands can now map communications to exactly where the consumer will be whether physical or digital (the collision making one approach). Understanding this flow and having a structure and strategy in place to engage, empower, and enhance an individual's lifestyle will give brands the power to truly become consumer integrated and in line with consumer wants, needs, passions, and lives.

#### About Paul Miser:

##### Professionally

Paul Miser is a social interaction junkie; ever-chasing the perfect fit for the social communication strategies into the integrated marketing concept. Through his start with database marketing, social branding strategies, and business intelligence, Miser believes that thinking of marketing as an ecosystem that, if designed right, will create complete brand integration into the lifestyle of it's consumer. Understanding technographic behavior and social interactions allows Miser to create strong social communication strings and paths to fulfill the consumer lifestyle integration...

Miser has over 10 years of marketing experience including emerging social media strategies, branding, strategic planning, 1:1 marketing, and business development with clients ranging from startups to Fortune 500 companies. Miser also holds a MBA from NWMSU and has an unparalleled passionate flair for innovation and forward thinking in the realm of social interactions.

##### Personally

After stints around the country, Miser has landed in NYC where you can find him competing in Triathlons, keeping up with his Chocolate Lab, speaking on emerging media, jamming with friends, enjoying a beer or three and daydreaming about far off tropical locations.

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