

Web 3.0: Victims named

Everybody in our business – that crossover area between marketing and digital strategy - wakes up and wonders ‘what’s next, what have I been missing while I had to go through the inconvenience of sleeping? John Straw, digital strategist, All About Brands plc explains more.

But sometimes it’s not what’s suddenly appeared on the digital radar, it’s what’s dropped off it. Barely have you finished conveying one thought about digital development, than your mind races several stages down the process to the outcome arising from the outcome.

As new ideas come on board and become integral to business almost in the blink of the eye, a great number of ideas that were cutting edge and ground-breaking just months or even weeks before fall off.

We are beginning to see the beginning of the end of one of our most traditional businesses based on one of the most ancient of concepts: written word on the modern-day equivalent of parchment is clinging on by its fingernails.

Barely has Web 2.0 established itself than digital strategists like me are looking at how to make the next leap to Web 3.0 - and the victims of change will be the big publishers, some of whom may vanish with some rapidity.

While Web 1.0 was establishment and acceptance, Web 2.0 had a false start with visionaries racing ahead of adopters before finally beginning to dominate business and personal life – but Web 3.0 will be the biggest challenge yet.

With Web 3.0 everyone becomes a publisher of content with the nett result that many traditional publishing businesses simply being drowned by the crowd of amateur publishers.

The problem with everything going digital is that many existing publishers have legacy overheads whilst trying to cope with the relatively small advertising yield they get from their digital divisions. Without strategic and urgent cost-cutting they are facing severe problems in the next few years.

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It also requires completely new methods of looking at new product development. Each new product project needs to be looked at like it was a standalone start-up that can get by on minimal costs and infrastructure yet at the same time employing the best creative brains.

They have to bridge the gap between getting out of analogue – traditional – publishing and going totally digital in their delivery.

And they can't suddenly make the change because they have to pay off their investments, and switch resource into digital. Some will simply disappear.

There is a favourite vision amongst futurologists relating to the New York Times: it stays loyal to analogue or offline news, and becomes nothing more than a newsletter – it doesn't have the income or resource to stay printed, and it doesn't have the resource to go completely digital. If you want to see a great rendition of how that looks for publishers, then do a Google search for EPIC 2015.