Technologies to Watch

AALL keynote speaker David Pogue predicts the new gadgets that will change everything

by Cornelius A. Pereira

The Opening General Session at the 101st AALL Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon, had all the elements of information and entertainment that should be the hallmark of any presentation. It featured David Pogue, New York Times technology columnist, who is responsible for a weekly analysis of current trends in the field, while wending his way through the latest gizmos, gadgets, and the online universe.
His survey and use of the most technologically-current gadgetry and Web resources left some in the audience thinking about what is available, while not just slightly envious of his investigative access to the technology. However, as he made clear, he sees quite a lot of junk mixed in with some of what can well become the latest trends, and he proceeded to highlight what he believed can well become the latest trends, and he proceeded to highlight what he believed to be the wave of the future, with a caveat—"It is difficult to predict [that] future."

If there is anything Pogue begs us to remember as we navigate this maze of available technology, it is that it is all transient. Today's hot button is constantly being replaced by the next new item, and there are a variety of avenues to access many of these items. Much is going on, and it is the global community that will in time determine what will be the next, lasting trend rather than an impetuous, pick-of-the-moment gadget. That said, he was off on his gallivant, playing with and gleefully presenting to us his interesting "toys."

**Megatrends in Technology**

Through his presentation, zany at times, humorous throughout, but always informative, he highlighted some of what he called "megatrends" in technology, which included such features as Voice-Over-Internet, Voice to Text, On-Demand TV, Wireless access everywhere, and the Web 2.0 Revolution. Many libraries are already involved with some of the technology Pogue displayed, especially in the Web 2.0 area. These Web sites provide for greater collaboration and creativity on the part of library patrons, thereby giving them a more hands-on approach to the product on display.

Voice-over-Internet has many organizations jostling for a place in the market, with Skype, T-Mobile, and Google all attempting to call attention to their many features that, in some instances, tug at your bottom line. Web pages and text messaging that provide for a virtually instantaneous recreation of information dazzle and boggle the mind with their plethora of choices, the least of which are the options of reading or listening to messages. Spinvox, Phonetag, and Callwave all transcribe voice mails and send them as text to your mobile inbox.

Pogue stressed that the one huge megatrend in cell phones is visual voicemail along with full Web pages. As he sang the praises of Steve Jobs, he also noted that Cingular, with foresight and, no doubt, commercial instincts in mind, was the one company that accepted Apple's hawking of its iPhone when everyone else looked askance. Pogue mentioned the variety of offerings via the wireless trend, with the Eye-Fi card, the Amazon Kindle, and the Skype phone. The cellular wireless trend allows one to get online anywhere, but, as he mentioned, at a significant expense and with limited availability.

Pogue's exploration of the Web 2.0 revolution showcased both familiar and not-so-familiar hunting grounds online, and he also took note of copyware that permitted one to strip copyright from media, making sure, in his jocular manner, that we understood that he wasn't advocating anything underhanded, but in fact, pertinently pointing out some of the negative aspects of such technology.

He engaged the audience with a copyright challenge to test our ability to determine any possible violations from a menu of choices, reminding us that we must be constantly aware of the legal implications of our actions. He also discussed the lack of ethical policies regulating the Web 2.0 technology, as well as the ongoing fight over net neutrality and how these different areas are still evolving as we work our way through this technological corridor.

**Technological Pitfalls**

Pogue also addressed some technological pitfalls, notably that so many households in the United States are without high speed Internet, high definition television, or both, and also indicated that media quality has suffered on account of compressed Web formats. These negatives, among some others, are unfortunately emphasized by the omnipresent unctuousness of the proliferate executive.

He ended his talk by reminding us of our need to educate the next generation on the legalities accompanying new technologies, along with the need to be more critical in discerning the credibility of products and Web sites. He suggested that with time, the wheat would be separated from the chaff, with standards establishing themselves along the way.

Pogue finished the morning's entertainment by using his triumvirate of musical expertise, and great humor in an engaging musical medley that poked fun at the technological world. In all, David Pogue's keynote address was a stimulating and entertaining presentation well worth the audio recording purchase, given its many informational details and relevance to our need as librarians to relate to the future while continuing to maintain solid standards.

---

**For More Information**

Purchase an audio recording of this session online at www.aallnet.org/products/products_educational.asp. (08AALL/CD-GS1, $11)

© 2008 Cornelius A. Pereira • Image © Shutterstock.com

---

Cornelius A. Pereira (cpereira@siu.edu) is acquisitions/catalog librarian at Southern Illinois University Law Library in Carbondale.
COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

TITLE: Technologies to Watch
SOURCE: AALL Spectrum 13 no1 S/O 2008

The magazine publisher is the copyright holder of this article and it is reproduced with permission. Further reproduction of this article in violation of the copyright is prohibited. To contact the publisher: http://www.aallnet.org/products/pub_spectrum.asp