

# The Future of Mobile:

The IAB Mobile Steering Group's Viewpoint



Internet  
Advertising  
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## The mobile space has seen many developments recently. What does the IAB Mobile Steering Group count as the highlights?

Undoubtedly, recent technological advancements are the most exciting development in the mobile space. Consider voice-activation which is found in many smart devices, and has the potential to reroute the path to purchase. The requirement to converse with these devices will unlock doors for advertisers to not just sell, but offer the user relevant information and advice – key to building a strong relationship. Plus, these devices utilise machine learning – the more they are used, the smarter they get. The recent proliferation of Intelligent Personal Assistants (IPAs), for example, combines voice-control with artificial intelligence (AI) to create a tool where interactions are powerful effective and natural.

Smart devices aren't just confined to the home, though. The car is possibly the ultimate mobile device and its automation stands to revolutionise how we interact with it. Imagine when the car is connected to all the user's apps and features a dashboard screen, which will have a fresh set of marketing moments to tap in to. Ford has collaborated with Amazon to give drivers access to Alexa, allowing them to request news and add items to Amazon shopping lists.

These developments foster the generation of data from new points. Marketers will be able to build a broader view of their audience, then target them with awe-inspiring content. Pokémon GO brought augmented reality (AR) to everyone's attention last year, think of what can be achieved after brands have had some years to experiment with it! Both AR and its more immersive sibling, virtual reality (VR), will require time to establish themselves in everyday situations. Practice will make perfect in getting AI advertiser-ready, too, but with the mobile market in the UK growing by 56.1% from H1 2015 to H1 2016 (IAB UK H1 2016 Digital Adspend Results), it's only a matter of time before brands can leverage the full power of technology that was almost fantasy a decade ago.

# Some new tech sounds like it's come straight out of a sci-fi film, but what does the Mobile Steering Group think might actually work in the future?

How about true AI? A lot of what is currently labelled as AI is, in fact, machine learning – whereby the tech has to be 'trained' using massive amounts of data. True AI, tech that can think for, and learn by, itself is still some way off. Nevertheless, researchers are making strides in the right direction. Last year an AI programme, AlphaGO, beat the 18-time world champion in a five-game match of Go, arguably the world's hardest board game, marking a turning point in neural networks and machine learning.

Where we currently stand with AR and VR gives the industry a healthy testbed on which to further experiment. Right now, brands have been able to showroom products through AR and VR. This might involve browsing clothes and 'trying them on' in a virtual fitting room. But what if you could 'feel' the texture of a sweater or the sand of a Tahitian beach as you stood on a cresting bay fringed with palm trees in a Pacific breeze? Pretty engaging, right? This is something that could be commonplace in the not-too-distant future, thanks to strides made in the field of haptics, using micro-vibrations to emulate touch.

Then you have wearables. It's early days yet, but Snapchat's Spectacles have already generated plenty of interest and they currently feature a camera only. Give it another decade and maybe we'll have a wearable device that combines AR, VR and AI – plus who knows what else? Perhaps contact lenses? Samsung last year patented lenses with a built-in camera so we're clearly moving in the right direction. The exact form it will take is yet to be determined, but ergonomics (along with people's sense of self-awareness) point toward a face gadget of some kind, but one that's subtle and unassuming.

# And finally, what should marketers be looking out for over the next five years?

## Tech...

Mobile now commands the lion's share of display adspend pounds, and we can expect this trend to continue. Mobile may now be the premier device, but that doesn't mean it should be the only focus for advertisers. Moving forward, advertisers should take a cross-device approach to campaigns, ranging from the smartphone to smart home devices and wearables (not to mention the connected car).

Voice-activated devices may also be directing a shift towards a zero-user interface: notice how many don't have screens? That's a curveball for an industry that's come to view the screen as its natural home. The screen won't become obsolete, of course, although brands will have to fit voice-initiated interactions into their marketing mix. This will be further compounded by the rise of Chatbots. Smartphones themselves will need to be sturdier as they become the hub that connects people with their devices and services. Wearable tech like the smartwatch has proved to be popular with consumers so far, yet manufacturers will have to bring out the endemic dynamism these devices hold to really push them to their potential.

## What it means for the industry...

The shift in how users interact with devices and services is exciting for advertisers. Talking to an object may seem a little weird, but as people get used to it, it will become apparent that it's much easier to find relevant content. There are still a few fallibilities that must be ironed out – for example, cross-device identification and measurement. Every partner in the value chain must also do their part to tackle ad-fraud, a key theme across digital this year, along with brand safety and the importance of context.

That said, the future looks very promising. Mobile marketing will become better – deeply integrated, personalised and contextual - like being able to book travel and accommodation whilst using your favourite maps app. In the meantime, expect the mobile to handle a wider range of roles, becoming wiser and (if possible) more indispensable than ever!

# Many thanks to our Mobile Steering Group members that contributed to this viewpoint. Here are some of their favourite pieces of tech and top tips...

Tatiana Filimonova, Business Development Director, All in One Media

**FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH:** AR is my favourite – it allows you to go beyond reality while staying in the real world. It makes magic true, like when you were a child and you believed that anything is possible.

**TOP TIP:** Don't stop searching! Go where nobody has gone before. As Steve Jobs said, people don't know what they want until you show it to them.



Andy Beames, Commercial Director, Blis

**FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH:** I'm currently obsessed with my Amazon Echo, but not as much as my baby daughter – I'm worried she'll say "Alexa" before she says "Daddy"!

**TOP TIP:** Don't do anything too complicated. Innovate in increments that allow people to adopt the tech at their own pace – where each advance 'trains' people for the next – so it feels like natural behaviour.

Andrew Heald, Director, Brand and Agency Partnerships, Celtra

**FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH:** I realise this is a pedestrian answer, but I love apps that make life simpler, specifically my banking apps which allow me to complete transactions faster. Additionally, being able to scan and send documents from your mobile has been a great help in trying to move house!

**TOP TIP:** Don't react to developments in the market now, think about where you want your brand to be in a couple of years and aim there. As the programmatic marketplace has matured, brands are looking toward creative for incremental gains to performance!





Lorenzo Bianchi, Global Product Lead for App Re-engagement, Google

**FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH:** Healthcare tech inspires me the most. I think that in a not-too-distant future we will all be able to enjoy the benefits of wearable tech devices that will allow for 24/7 monitoring of health signals and can save our lives.

**TOP TIP:** Embrace automation and machine learning, measure effectively and build great assets so that you can spend more time focusing on your business KPIs, understanding the user journey and identifying the key moments that matter to them.

Floriana Nicastro, Manager, Mobile Product Strategy, MediaMath

**FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH:** Voice control technology is getting sharper and the user path to conversion, quicker! With Amazon bringing Alexa to market, conversions are no longer one-click but one-voice command purchase away. With the IoT ecosystem being developed, we now have real mics for the home, car, kitchen and more.

**TOP TIP:** Think omnichannel – build the bridge to offline – build mobile-first audience data. Analyse mobile's impact on your customer path to conversion and adapt your strategy to reach your audience along the way.



Katharine Hansford, Manager, Business Transformation, Publicis Media

**FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH:** Smart home assistants are currently the embodiment of a futuristic world that once upon a time we could only dream of! Being able to take actions simply by speaking out loud to a room not only saves us time and energy but indicates a move towards liberating us from the screens we have become so addicted to.

**TOP TIP:** Take a 70 / 20 / 10 approach to your mobile strategy, where 70% is proven media tactics, 20% is optimising previous tests and 10% is pure innovation. Always look to have 10% brand new activity so that you're pioneering the latest technology.



Naomi Hands, Director of Commercial Partnerships,  
Somo

**FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH:** I'm completely obsessed with Monzo - such a simple product and great company, with goals to revolutionise a traditional industry, in order to become the Facebook of Banking.  
**TOP TIP:** Build your mobile strategy around business and customer goals that you want to achieve, not around channels or technology specifically. This will give you clarity around success that is flexible enough to change as the landscape changes.



Victoria Spencer, Client Services Manager, Voluum

**FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH:** At the moment, it's wearable tech that track fitness and the numerous free apps to connect it with. It's definitely helping me make my new year's resolution last that little bit longer!  
**TOP TIP:** Think mobile first, don't take a desktop approach to solving a mobile challenge. Remember to put the consumer at the centre of your campaigns and ensure the creative message is engaging and provides the best experience across all their screens, led by mobile.

Finlay Clark, UK Country Manager, Waze

**FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH:** Machine learning has enabled Google Translate to reduce errors by around 75%, meaning the quality has improved more in a single leap than in the last ten years combined. If you're learning a language or are in a strange country, you can speak a sentence and it will translate the whole thing - the accuracy and speed is simply staggering!  
**TOP TIP:** The shift to mobile, smaller screens and less attention calls for brands to be top of mind with a simple and clear offering. It's critical to keep investing in brand building and being there with your product or message when people are making decisions.





Sharon Lindqvist, Director of Product Marketing,  
Widespace

**FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECH:** It's got to be the smartwatch. For such a tiny screen, there's a ton of potential. It's the very definition of the always-on device. With a bit of creativity there's no reason why any and every mobile interaction can't happen on it.

**TOP TIP:** 100% of Asia can't be wrong – go mobile first! The desktop will never be fully obsolete but, like the upright piano, most people prefer Spotify for a convenient fix of Chopin. And don't be afraid to ask questions about tech – if a supplier can't easily explain how it works, odds are, it doesn't.



## Need a little extra inspiration? These case studies demonstrate the power of mobile...

One of the drawbacks about browsing the web on your phone is that it can take time for pages to load. Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) counter this by delivering lightning-fast load times. The Washington Post is one such publisher to realise this, publishing over 1000 articles in AMP daily. According to Senior Product Manager David Merrell, load times have improved by 88%, meaning that users are more likely to click as they associate the brand with speedy loading times.

The auto industry isn't just putting in the work to turn the car into the next big thing (literally) in mobile. Asia's leading car brands, such as Toyota, Suzuki and Kia are bridging the online and offline worlds to drive traffic to dealerships. No easy feat with stock dispersed across brand, regional and individual dealerships. However, these companies are pioneering hyperlocal targeting, backed up with mobile-specific rich media like coupons. Toyota has run ads across 15,000 U.S. cities that are tailored to the location as part of the 'Let's Go Places' campaign.

Mobile's unique location-based capabilities have also been employed by the alcohol industry. Heineken has put mobile to use to drive footfall into pubs and measure the impact on users of seeing ads for the beer. Combined with third-party data, mobile has given Heineken the ability to plan incredibly informed campaigns.

Meanwhile, Amstel's foray into VR is a fantastic example of how advertising using these new technologies can be made to seem as if it isn't advertising at all. Groups of friends were given headsets, placed on static bikes and challenged to race each other through 'the streets of Amsterdam'. Once over the finish line, the racers were handed a virtual pint, conveniently supplemented by a real one. Proost!

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