

CSCI E-2a

Assignment #1, Due Monday, September 22

Eastman Kodak did not understand how exponential growth in computing power would make digital cameras a viable alternative to film, even though digital imaging was invented in the 1960s. (see <http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/bldigitalcamera.htm>). To the sophisticated and experienced Kodak executives, early digital cameras were little more than curiosities, no match for the "nice bright colors...the greens of summer" of Kodachrome. They didn't grasp that when digital power grows exponentially, in a decade it has increased 1000 times, and the impossible becomes possible.

This sort of transformational change isn't unique to the digital explosion. Cars made buddy whips product of the distant past. What makes the digital explosion so interesting is how much it has blown away, how pervasive the changes are, how quickly they arrive.

Think back to how things were 10 or 20 years ago. How has your day-to-day activity changed? Do you shop in the same way? Do you conduct business differently now than you did then? Do interact differently, travel differently, seek and receive services differently?

In anticipation of a lively discussion during class on September 22, please identify other situations where rapid growth in computing power, storage capacity, or communication speed has rendered a particular product or business model obsolete and created new opportunities. Put your thoughts on paper - not more than a page - and send them to cscie2a@googlegroups.com by midnight Sunday night. Be sure to include your name and email address with the submission. We'll circulate some of the ideas for discussion during part of Monday's class. (This assignment will not be graded.)