

Creator of Twitter sees blur of change

September 17 2012, by Jon Swartz

In creating Twitter, Jack Dorsey changed the world of communication. In founding the company Square, he is redefining mobile payments. Yet one of Silicon Valley's brightest stars says he believes the future is all about the past.

"Consider history," Dorsey says in his soft-spoken, low-key manner. "Every technology was invented for one purpose: Enable humans to take actions faster."

Motioning toward a photo of the Golden Gate Bridge, and invoking the power of plumbing in the world-domination plans of the Roman Empire, the 35-year-old Dorsey says water-supply systems played a pivotal role in letting Julius Caesar and others expand their empire.

Prognosticating the future of technology is nearly impossible in five years, let alone 30, he says.

Just 30 years ago, the Internet, PCs and smartphones were mere glimmers in the eyes of scientists. Cable TV was in its infancy. Music and movies were on albums, cassettes and videotape. Few could foresee how comprehensively the Web, smartphones and tablets would change the world.

Looking forward, personal technology will infuse nearly every facet of American consumer life: retail, transportation, education - you name it, Dorsey and others say. The impact will be so far and wide that it might be taken for granted as daily life.

The full force of tech will be all around us in the form of a growing cashless society, where most transactions are done with smartphones; same-day delivery of goods ordered online or at brick-and-mortar retailers; the elimination of PCs in favor of smartphones and tablets; robots in all forms; the proliferation of data through cloud computing; and more. Change will be rapid and seamless.

Ubiquitous technology will continue to blend into the American consciousness, to the point where it will be rarely noticed - unless it doesn't work. "I bet you only notice (an [electrical outlet](#)) when I point it out or it doesn't work," Dorsey says.

About the only thing that can blunt tech's influence is distrust in its mind-shifting change. That is anathema to Old World, empire-building thinking - particularly in industries where change in infrastructure and the use of tech is pricey, Dorsey says.

Attitude, not technology, colors people's fears about too much data floating in the clouds and coursing over the Internet. "I'm a big believer in serendipity," he says. "The need to know bubbles up."

"Kids become masters of [technology](#) and learn from it," Dorsey says. Adopters of Twitter have turned it into a tool to "take the pulse of the planet."

From where will future tech spring forth? Dorsey says the San Francisco Bay Area will still be tech's mecca: "California has always had the Go West, can-do spirit of the Gold Rush, Hollywood and [Silicon Valley](#)."

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