



Stanford eCorner

What Will You Create in White Space?

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Believing that we are exiting the "dark ages of computing," investor and entrepreneur John Lilly issues a challenge to technology entrepreneurs in this era of chaos: What will you create in the white space of opportunity that lies ahead?



Transcript

So this chart I call the dark ages of computing. So the blue is Windows. So from 1987 till recently, Windows dominated. So as I was putting this together yesterday, I'm like 'man this looks like the dark ages. It's like that we fell off the map. Innovation stopped, it was dominated by just Microsoft and the snarky part of me says innovation in Microsoft in that period is probably an oxymoron. But it wasn't a good time. You had this little bit of Macintosh, but Macintosh wasn't a very good time either, we were going to get bought for the amount of cash we had, right. This sucked. It sucked, sucked, sucked.

But now it doesn't. So this is 2011 and it's getting better. So now you've got - I read something the other day that for the first time in probably 20 years more than 50% of emails were read not with outlook. And it's because it's on your phone. It's because it's in your tablets and phone and on your TVs. This is going to change everything. For the first time, we've got this incredibly high energy explosion; I think things are in chaos. So the question to you guys, is, there's white space. So we don't know yet whether we will go into this dark ages where one of these dominates for another 20 years. I hope not, and I kind of don't think so, because I think the amount of our lives we are mediating through mobile, through computing generally is getting higher and higher and higher.

So my view is that we're exiting in the dark ages. Everything's in chaos, everything's a promise. There are going to be a bunch of funny starts. There's going to be a bunch of things that they grow and get big and disappear off the face of the earth. Just like the pre-Cambrian explosion. Or like the renaissance, we have lots and lots and lots of ideas and this is the time we are living in now. So the question for you guys is what will you put there? And I think this is the essence of entrepreneurship, which is like 'well I see that map. I see how it sucked before, but I'm going to draw it my way now.' That's - I'll tell you that's the most exciting chart in the whole time that I've been in and around computing.