



What Comes After  
What Comes Next?



# CHAPTER 9



## What Comes After What Comes Next?

*Who will provide the grand design, what is yours and what is mine?*

*'Cause there is no more new frontier, we have got to make it here.*

*We satisfy our endless needs and justify our bloody deeds*

*in the name of destiny and in the name of God.*

*–The Last Resort, The Eagles*

What comes next is the relentless push of the next wave of technology that will surprise us in novel and interesting ways. The ingenuity of the American experiment will continue to amaze and inspire. But even that pales in comparison to what comes *after* what comes next: the emergence of the grand American Renaissance.

It will be a renaissance of the Americas, led by America. What started with Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman and others will soar to heights never before seen or imagined. The stage has been under construction for well over two hundred

years. The audience is now seated and the actors are pacing backstage as we wait in anticipation for the show to start. And when the show starts, you can bet your ass that enabling digital technologies are going to have a starring role.

We are at the beginning of a revolution *and* a renaissance. Forget the naysayer and the pessimist who expound endless nonsense concerning productivity paradoxes. Let them wallow in their own shit. There is nothing that they can do to prevent the train from leaving the station.

*There is no virtue in being uncritical; nor is it a habit to which the young are given. But criticism is only the burying beetle that gets rid of what is dead, and, since the world lives by creative and constructive forces, and not by negation and destruction, it is better to grow up in the company of prophets than of critics.*

—Richard Livingstone

I *should* be using the final chapter of this text to summarize my brilliant theories (if you find them, please be kind enough to drop me an email and point them out: cleyva@theB2Bdepot.com) presented in previous chapters. Instead, I have elected to rant and rave about various and sundry topics that are of interest to me. Hey, it's my book; I can do whatever the fuck I want!

## The Soft Stuff is the Hard Stuff

However, if there were an overarching theme within this text, a *take away* of sorts, it would be this: human communications is the key to the advances that we seek within science and technology.

This meme is often summarized in the business press with the following phrase: *the soft stuff is the hard stuff*. The *soft stuff* they refer to is the antithesis of what drove the industrial revolution, and therefore, it should come as no surprise that our cherished institutions are having a difficult time coping. Evidence abounds supporting the fact that the *soft stuff* (interpreted in whatever fashion you like) produces *hard profits*, so struggle on.

I have made a crude attempt at describing how the soft stuff relates to the software development process. I have also alluded to the fact that in many ways, which are little understood at present, the business of business will be dominated by software for the foreseeable future. Hence, in my mind at least, this text is more of a business book than a technology tome.

Now, I am about to jump into the deep end and discuss things for which I am not eminently qualified to speak of. You are welcome to jump into these perilous waters with me, but be forewarned, there are no lifeguards on duty. I'm gone.

*Two tears in a bucket, motherfuckit...*

## Morning in America

Despite the critics and the cynics, and despite the fact that we still live in dangerous and troubled times (when have we not?)—there is a new day dawning, and the digital revolution is poised to play a leading role. Why? Because anytime the factors of production (especially with respect to art, music and literature) are placed in the hands of the people—people do what they have always done best: they create.

*Working as a printer, editor, journalist, and publisher during the years of the publishing industry's phenomenal growth, Walt Whitman became keenly aware that the tools necessary for his emergence as the new, democratic poet were at his disposal. He believed he could bring poetry to the common people, and with the publication of his 1855 *Leaves of Grass*, he assumed for himself the role of the American Poet, referring to himself as "one of the roughs," a common man.*

—Jason A. Pierce

Do you think that the Great American Poet could have published *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 had he not had access to the best available technology of his time? Is it remotely possible that an American slave in 1855, of impeccable erudition, could have produced such a work? The question itself is ludicrous. That an educated

slave during Whitman's time could have produced such a work is an impossible assumption.

Why? Because a slave had no access to the technology and the institutions required to publish and distribute. In 2002, what was once impossible is within our reach. Such an effort was not then, is not now, and will never be possible without the will, perseverance, inspiration, blood, sweat, and tears of the indomitable human spirit. However, today, any descendent of an American slave who possesses these qualities, and an impeccable erudition, could (and I believe will) produce a body of work of equal magnitude.



The Great American Poet

I do not mean to imply that all of the questions with regard to access to the machinery of society have been answered. As we all know, this is a work in progress. However, the fact that the impossible is now possible is a testament to how far we have come. We should draw strength and optimism from our achievements and learn to celebrate victories, large and small. The Net and other enabling digital technologies have had, and will continue to have, a democratizing impact with respect to questions of access. Meanwhile, we just have to keep on keeping on.

*Someday girl I don't know when we're gonna get to that place  
Where we really want to go and we'll walk in the sun  
But till then tramps like us baby we were born to run*

*—Born To Run, Bruce Springsteen*

## Prisons or Schools?

There is no greater investment in social capital that will level the playing field of economic opportunity for all citizens, and ensure the future of the nation, than an investment in public education at all levels, especially K-12. (Granted, I am no expert on social policy, but I am willing to listen.) In order to guarantee the possibility of *a chicken in every pot*, let us find a way to provide a laptop in *every student's backpack*.

*People will harbor a hopeful view of what they can achieve only if their societies do, in fact, offer some scope for individual accomplishment. If their societies provide them with the opportunity to grow as individuals and to have an impact on their environment, their attitudes will reflect those realities.<sup>59</sup>*

I am sick of the demagogues of both the right and the left that cannot find a way to improve the current state of affairs with respect to public education (funded by whatever creative means our best minds can devise). Perhaps public education should become the poster child of *The Radical Center* so that, at least on this one issue, we can move beyond political labels and the politics of personal

destruction—no matter how entertaining we might, from time to time, find these devices. It is not at all amusing that we jeopardize our children's (and through them, the nation's) future because of a fucked up, broken and outmoded way of thinking.



### The Nation's Future

Let us, within the technology industry, assume our share of civic responsibility and take a lead role in the public education space. I challenge the dominant corporations to collaborate in creating the necessary processes needed to seed the

program with the required resources. I challenge them to take the first steps in providing a framework for individuals to leverage when donating their time and energies.

Let us take our experience related to KM, infotainment and eLearning (humble as it may be at the moment) and apply it where it is likely to do significant good. Consider it an investment in the great developers and visionary leaders of the future—namely the ones who will lead our corporations to even greater triumphs tomorrow.

*Make your educational laws strict and your criminal ones can be gentle;  
but if you leave youth its liberty you will have to dig dungeons for ages.*

*—Michel de Montaigne*

*He who opens a school door, closes a prison.*

*—Victor Hugo*

## The Good Old Days?

I love America, warts and all, but I cringe whenever I hear politicians whining about the good old days. America has never been better, yet her finest hours lie ahead.

Do you want to return to the good old days of the 1950's—an era when Black Americans in the South were without basic civil rights, when Mexican Americans were treated as indentured servants, and when women were still regarded by many as second-class citizens? Fuck that!

I too hear America singing, singing her endless songs of rebirth. I am an American and a patriot. My ancestors have roamed these continents for thousands of years. I am the son of immigrants and a singer of the immigrant's song, prepared to defend America to the death, if need be.

*Johnny get your gun, and kiss your mamma bye  
The time has finally come, are you prepared to die?  
For that which you believe in, for your family and your friends  
That sweet old cause is calling us, and upon us it depends  
To make a contribution, to take a clear cut stand  
The music is playing all around us Johnny  
Do you wanna join the band?*

*–War, The Aztec Kings*

Yeah, who wants to join the band? America, despite her faults, is the greatest nation on Earth. Those who would belittle her would do better to clean up their own houses before throwing stones. Clean ‘em up or we may have to clean up the fuckers for you! The American Renaissance will not be led by the weak kneed. Challenge us if you like, but be prepared to get your asses kicked. If you fear the U.S. Armed Forces, just wait until our technology and culture are hitting on all cylinders.

Leyva, you are a complete lunatic! Why all this talk of a renaissance, of war, and of patriotism? Because, my dear friend, the answers lie in our people, in art, faith, and hope—*not* in technology.