



# THE NETWORK FOWLER AND NETTED MANKIND

Who can do without the Internet today? Many conveniences have been born of current networking technologies. Can we ever again do without online banking? What of the social media networks that allow us to stay in touch with friends? Will we ever go to the library again to research an essay? When was the last time we used a telephone book, and what of the convenience of online shopping?

By Wilfred Hahn



Lastly, not to be overlooked, is the “marriage saver.” Disputes and debates can now be settled almost instantly by doing a web search. No need to argue.

All in all, who would dislike the many conveniences of a networked world? Readers will know that its many benefits come at a price. Indeed, the rise of “networked man” has many repercussions. Do we know what they are and what facilitations they hold for the prophetic timeline?

### A Time Such as This

Just what is the most incredible dynamic of worldwide networking trends? Without a doubt, it is the amazing speed of their adoption and application. One may be excused for not being aware of the sizzling pace. There are many developments and much complexity. Likely also playing a role in the complacency regarding networking, is that many of us may be nonplussed by the speed of change and innovation. After all, isn’t rapid change normal today?

Well yes ... but, only recently. One must understand just how unique and extraordinary are our times. A historical perspective is needed. When modern-day developments are benchmarked against the human time line upon earth—over many

millennia—the stunning rapidity of advancement seen in our day becomes starkly evident.

In fact, the pace of change is so sudden one would not be faulted for holding some suspicion. Bible readers (most certainly those that allow the Bible to speak literally) would be particularly sensitive and discerning. Bible-believers, after all, are prompted to discern the times ... to know the season of the Lord’s return. They are charged to “watch” for the dangers to their faith as well as the signs of the times.

To someone holding millennial perspectives—both retroactively as well as prophesied—today’s networking phenomenon would stick out like an enormous anomaly. From such a millennial vantage point, it would be indefensible to not regard any of the “sudden” trends of the last several hundred years as being prophetically significant.

While we must take all of our perspectives and conclusions from the Bible (not going beyond what it says: 1 Corinthians 4:6), we can nevertheless still be reasonably alerted to trends and developments that “enable” or will “precede” actual fulfilled prophecies.

So doing, we identify at least five or six characteristics that alert us of possible prophetically enabling trends: 1. Acceleration (particularly so after 1948, that being the point that God’s timepiece, Israel, again became a sovereign entity in its original land);



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2. A seeming improbability and inexplicability of its emergence ... at least at first; 3. Catering to humanism, “lust of the flesh” and political expediency; 4. Having scope for worldwide impact (i.e. not just applying locally or to North America); 5. Likely having confluence and interconnection with other accelerating trends (happening contemporaneously); and, above all, 5. Suddenness and rapidity.

On the basis of these indicators, the phenomenon of globally “networked man” definitely qualifies as a “prophetically enabling” trend. We will explain further.

### Prophetically Significant Phenomenon

We have often written of the rapid trend of financialization—this referring to the increasing capture of human activities in the form of financial transactions and the imputed financial value of all actions and forms of assets. It is one of the most significant of all “prophetically enabling” trends, in our view. (The 2001 book *The Endtime Money Snare: How to Live Free* [now out of print] focused on this very development).

The aspect that we wish to focus upon here, is that the financialization and consumerization of last-day man would not be possible without the advance of networking. A major user of networks are, of course, payment cards—i.e. credit or debit cards. This is hardly news, as it is a facilitating technology already some 40 years old.

However, networking developments have today moved far beyond financialization trends, facilitating networks of all kinds—as already mentioned, the Internet, also burgeoning Internet tracking recording technologies, new payment systems, telecommunications, social media (i.e. Facebook) and many others. These systems are all being embraced rapidly. For example, Facebook today has

more than 500 million users, of which half log on every day.

As a result, data volumes are exploding. Network technologies are supporting new services and conveniences. More data has been created in the past two years than in the entire previous history of the human race, according to Forbes.com. Much higher data volume ... many countless multiples of current levels ... are surely ahead.

### Intersection by the Smartphone

Before exploring future trends further, it is first key to recognize that it is a relatively recent electronic invention that has encouraged the embrace of a “networked” world: namely, the Smartphone. It brings together the camera and a video screen, with telephone and Internet connection. In our opinion, it very well may represent “the end of technology.”

Taking this view, we have explored one of the prophetic implications of the Smartphone (“the culture of self”) before in the article “Prophecy and the End of Technology” (MCM, June 2015).

Here, we reproduce a pertinent excerpt:

We ask this question: Just what technologies must yet emerge so that pre-millennial Bible prophecy can be fulfilled? Nuclear power sufficient to blow up the entire habitations of mankind already exists. Globalism and a global community of mankind already exist, attributable in part to telecommunications technologies. Flight was invented a little more than a century ago (i.e., fulfilling Isaiah 60:8). What is missing?

[...] technology has at least one more role to play in the prophetic timeline of the world. [...] The most pivotal technological developments over the past several decades, as everyone will know, have been the Internet and the personal cell phone. [...] Crucially, these two developments have lately converged into one leading edge—the Smartphone.



That was the significant development—the merging of the cell phone with a web-enabling interconnection.

Why was this significant? This merging opens the gateway to the ultimate ‘dotage upon the individual’ (the self), though within a centrally controlled, global nexus of connections. The Smartphone is a personal device. And thus, it becomes the direct channel between the world and the individual’s personal world. The technology coming into existence allows a mass personalization through a complete monitoring of your needs, likes and identifications.

While the “prophetic enablements” of the Smartphone technology are already both gargantuan and global, more significant developments are in prospect.

To get a sense of the pace of change, we quote this expert source: “The Smartphone is revolutionizing our world, causing an explosion of connectedness. By the end of 2017, over two billion mobile phone or tablet users will make some form of mobile commerce transaction. Ninety-five percent of mobile Internet users look up local information on their phones for the purpose of calling or visiting a business. It is estimated that mobile devices will account for 27% of commercial transactions by the end of 2018, representing 1 out of every 4 US retail e-commerce dollars.”<sup>1</sup>

What is the next “prophetically significant” extension for the Smartphone? It is already underway, and it is “live streaming.”

### **A Future World of Full-time Video Coverage**

Consider that by the end of 2017, it is anticipated that nearly 80% of all photos taken in the world will be taken on Smartphones. Many of these are networked ... perhaps sent to friends to view. It is sobering to realize that it was little more than a decade ago that people would use cameras that required film development. Now, virtually all pictures are digital.

What is livestreaming? This refers to the viewing and sending of live video. Readers may already be viewing videos and movies over the Internet. Today, some 75% of all data traffic on the Internet is attributable to video. Given the mass proliferation of the Smartphones, it will be no surprise that the most

livestreaming will be consumed through the Smartphone platform.

However, the “livestreaming” of our focus here is a real-time broadcast feed. An example of this would be the news network CNN, sending a live, real-time broadcast over the Internet. More news networks are now rolling out such platforms. Wherever a Smartphone user may be, they will be plugged into real-time video broadcasting.

The next development will be that everyone with a Smartphone will be able to broadcast their own “live video” to anyone else live ... even the whole world. South Korea is a leader in this field. AfreecaTV, a popular app in that country, allows anyone to freely broadcast live video. Media experts predict that this technology will soon catch on everywhere else. It is very possible that the day will arrive where most everyone in the world has a Smartphone that is “networked” and continuously “livestreaming.”

The recent (and most-watched in history) boxing match between Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor illustrated a new reality in this regard. Newer social media livestreaming capability has made it easier to instantly share live feeds of the fight, making it impossible to control “bootleg” viewing of the match. This is an indication of how far livestreaming has already advanced.

Given the advancing state of livestreaming, we think of the Bible’s prophecy of the “two witnesses” found in Revelation 11. Scripture indicates that it will be a global media event, as shown in these verses:

Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them (Revelation 11:7-11).

## The technological features of the Smartphone seem to best fit the prophecy mentioned in Revelation 11.

It may very well be the case that the world will view a “livestreaming” of the Two Witnesses on their Smartphones. Possibly, they may even be sending each other gifts purchased online through Amazon or eBay.

The technological features of the Smartphone seem to best fit the prophecy mentioned in Revelation 11. Real-time viewing of the Two Witnesses by many people all over the world, and the two-way communication being implied, point to the emergence of a device with the capabilities of the networked Smartphone.

### Thoughts to Ponder

The renowned author and historian, Niall Ferguson, recently published an article in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, entitled “The False Prophecy of Hyperconnection: How to Survive the Networked Age.”<sup>2</sup> Taking a secular position, he points to the dangers of a networked world. By his reckoning, the Internet hasn’t achieved the promises of the technocrats and the high-tech industry. Their pitch was that networking would make the world a better place of equal-opportunity. In fact, just the opposite is occurring in his view.

Technology and invention can provide conveniences that do not require moral compromise. But we have to again ask: Is there any significance to be found in the rapidity of changes? Was the technology explosion delayed in world history until a time such as this?

“Does a bird swoop down to a trap on the ground when no bait is there? Does a trap spring up from the ground if it has not caught anything?” (Amos 3:5).

We may enjoy all the conveniences of the digital age. However, the connectedness that it spawns ultimately will exact a vulnerability upon humankind. It will be used as a trap and coercion to worship the Antichrist. This is seen in Revelation 13. The Second Beast, “[...] forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark [...]” (verses 16-17).

The writer of Ecclesiastes says that “[...] no one knows when their hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so people are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them” (Ecclesiastes 9:12). That may already apply to most people upon earth today ... whether Christian or not.

As for those who are earthdwellers during the Tribulation period, “Terror and pit and snare await you, people of the earth. Whoever flees at the sound of terror will fall into a pit; whoever climbs out of the pit will be caught in a snare” (Isaiah 24:17-18).

For those Christians of the last-days before the Rapture, Christ provides both a warning and a reward concerning snares and traps. First the warning: “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:34-36).

But finally, we can appropriate the blessed promise given to David: “Praise be to the Lord, who has not let us be torn by their teeth. We have escaped like a bird from the fowler’s snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Psalm 124:6-8).

### Extra

Some took the view that debit cards, for example, were evil because they led to a one-world financial system that a world ruler could use to lead mankind astray and to force obedience to him. This is a debatable view. We would take the position that it isn’t systems or weapons that are evil, but rather are reflected through the motivations of humans or angels. (MC)

### ENDNOTES

- 1 [www.invespcro.com/blog/mobile-commerce](http://www.invespcro.com/blog/mobile-commerce)
- 2 <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2017-08-15/false-prophecy-hyperconnection>