

Trends: Looking Back at 2011 and Forward to 2012

COMPILED BY HOLLY BOLTON, CPSM, AND MARK TAWARA, FSMPS, CPSM

The end of the year is a natural time for reflection and anticipation. Over the course of a year, change is inevitable—especially in technology. Technology is an integral part of our lives and work, so much so that 2010–11 National President Carolyn Ferguson, FSMPS, CPSM, established the SMPS National Technology Committee to monitor and report on advances in marketing technology.

We decided to seek input from a variety of professionals to find out their thoughts about 2011 and their opinions about 2012. Largely through social media, we asked for volunteers to participate in an online survey with a few open-ended questions. The survey results centered on major themes, including social media's acceptance in the architectural, engineering, and construction community; cloud computing; building information modeling; mobile technology; and the need for firms to continue to invest in technology, even while suffering the effects of a down economy. Additional responses are posted on mysmps.org.

What do you feel were the most significant technological evolutions of 2011?



“The continued evolution of building information modeling (BIM) as not only a technology but a process. As BIM is transitioning into an industry standard, those who were the early adopters are continuing to pave the way with new integrations of other systems and providing a deeper integration among design teams. The availability to more

deeply connect BIM with sustainable design, digital fabrication, construction and owner-driven O&M processes has become a huge competitive advantage for firms and will continue to do so.”

**Brian Skripac, Associate AIA, LEED AP BD+C,
Director of BIM, DesignGroup, Columbus, OH**

“I believe that Google+ was the biggest evolution of 2011, as it will be the start of a huge game changer in social media, search, and identity management.”

**Chris Brogan, President, Human Business Works,
Amesbury, MA**



“Smartphone technology impacts our everyday life and connects us to information immediately. In 2010, Android surpassed iPhone sales and now in 2011 it has become the dominant choice for smartphone technology. Mobile technology keeps expanding and has taken the place of other technology devices like cameras, GPS, radio,

etc. Along with that trend is utilizing mobile devices to access social media sites. Over 50 percent of the world's population is under 30. This is making an impact on how we communicate, and we are significantly seeing this impact through technology and social media.”

**Sarah Gonnella, Senior CRM Consultant,
Acumen Advisors, Dacula, GA**

What aspects of technology do you feel impacted companies most in 2011, and how?



“Social media, especially grappling with social media policies. How much do you allow workers to access, and if you block access, do you impede your business goals?”

**Laurie Strickland, FSMPS, CPSM,
Director of Marketing, Nitsch Engineering,
Boston, MA**



“Server virtualization is not new but has become absolutely essential and mature in 2011. It enables quick and efficient deployment of servers while reducing the footprint and energy consumption in the data center.”

**David Takeyama, IT Director,
Oceanit, Honolulu, HI**



“2011 marked the acceptance of social media as a tool in professional services marketing. Every business from architecture firms to grocery stores now ends its messages with, ‘Find us on Facebook.’”

**Tony Huver, Marketing Coordinator,
Barton Malow Company, Southfield, MI**



“A/E/C companies need to understand Web site design that suits mobile devices or they appear to be very outdated. They should also embrace platforms like YouTube, Twitter, and mobile-friendly technology to stay competitive. Distinctive firms will invent their own apps... imagine the possibilities.”

Barbara Shuck, FSMPS, CPSM,

**Vice President, Marketing Director, Emc2 Group
ArchitectsPlanners, PC, Mesa, AZ, and Secretary/
Treasurer, SMPS National Board of Directors**



“I believe that A/E/C firms would love to hit the pause button and take a collective deep breath, perhaps a nap. The pace and breadth of technology innovation have been steadily increasing while revenues, profits, and resources have been stretched like never before. BIM, virtualization, social media, cloud, mobile. Not to mention globalization and four generations

in the workplace and all of the technological challenges that those two business shifts imply. It is almost like a high hurdle race, where the hurdles are getting closer together and higher at the same time with no finish line in sight.”

**Christopher Parsons, Founder, Knowledge Architecture,
San Francisco, CA**

“Social media/networking offers an array of tools that marketers can use to engage clients at a fairly low cost.”

What was your favorite new technology tool (software, hardware, or gadget) you started using in 2011, and why?

“Turntable.fm. It’s a pretty seamlessly social experience in which you can share music with your friends in real time.”

**Noelle Chun, Storyteller and Social Media Strategist,
Yahoo!, Sunnyvale, CA**



“Markdown (Web-based markup language). I just started using MailTags and Mail Act-On for the Mac. I started using Facetime (video calling) and I love it.”

**Matt Handal, Business Development
Manager, Trauner Consulting,
Philadelphia, PA**



“My favorite technology that I started using in 2011 is WordPress. With WordPress it’s possible to create a Web site in a very short period of time—it looks great, there’s no cost, it’s customizable, and it can be easily updated.”

**Michelle Skupin, Marketing Manager,
Builder Homesite, Inc., Austin, TX**



“The iPad2 was my gadget of the year. It’s portable, powerful, adaptable, and overall brilliantly designed. As hard as other manufacturers try, nobody has been able to come close in terms of usability. Google+ Hangout feature is an under-the-radar technology wonder, but until it integrates with Google’s business platform, it won’t take off in the A/E/C.”

**Adam Kilbourne, CPSM, Director of Marketing,
Tec Inc. Engineering & Design, Eastlake, OH**

What do you think are the biggest technological challenges companies will face in 2012?

“Security. With a greater dependence upon cloud computing, the importance of a stable Internet connection becomes more important. Also, if there are any security issues in the cloud it could expose the vulnerability to a much larger user base.”

David Takeyama, IT Director, Oceanit, Honolulu, HI

“Privacy, trust, and measuring the ROI of digital marketing investments.”

Noelle Chun



“I think A/E/C companies will be most challenged by the significant financial investment required to equip and upgrade their technology networks, hardware, and software. As many firms continue to recover from the economic recession, they will likely struggle with justifying the cost of keeping pace with technology. Yet it is a

key component to positioning firms to win, deliver, and measure the performance of projects.”

**Mike Plotnick, Communications Leader,
MasterCard Worldwide, O’Fallon, MO**



“It’s an obvious one: how to keep up with ever-changing technology. As we go into detail about all of the great advancements made in 2011, those technological products and services could be out of date before this survey even goes to print. The tendency to continue using old forms of technology because ‘it is easier,’ is quickly becoming an excuse of the past. Today

more than ever, clients expect teams to adapt and change quickly with technology to bring the most innovative solution to the table.”

**Jason L. De Leon, Business Development Manager,
Blue Cottage Consulting, Ann Arbor, MI**



“Since more and more firms are outsourcing their IT [information technology] solutions through cloud computing, there is a widening ‘knowledge gap’ among IT professionals. IT is no longer a cost center at a firm the way it once was. We don’t need a person to sit in a server room to ensure the email system remains operational or that all security patches

are consistently applied. Typically our clients are directors of technology or CIOs and they tell us that they’ll now have much more time to help their firms’ bottom lines and work on billable projects. Individuals, firms, and the industry as a whole need to explore a more broad skill set for today’s typical IT professional.”

**Brian Reilly, CPSM, Senior Consultant, LiftOff, LLC,
Crofton, MD**

“Planning proves to be key to successful social media integration.”

How do you think technology will evolve in 2012? What’s next, in your opinion?



“I think that mobile devices will get more and more powerful, and some day soon surpass the desktop as the go-to machine.”

**Eric Schimelpfenig, Owner, Sketch This.NET,
Greenfield, MA**

“Voice recognition will be big. It’s in the new iPhone. I can see it becoming standard in computers like videocams did. I can see marketers dictating proposals. Text expansion will also become more mainstream. I’ve used it every day for years. It’s very useful. But I think the biggest evolution will be HTML5. We have just a smidgen of it in our new site and it’s pretty neat. I can see A/E/C Web sites really utilizing HTML5, especially architects. BIM will also evolve. I’ve seen prototypes of iPhone apps that use GPS [global positioning system] and allow you to walk through a virtual BIM model while on site.”


Matt Handal

“What is next is a continued integration of video technology. Each year we hear that video is catching on, but on a grand scale it remains to be constrained to a long, thought-out production, as opposed to existing more prevalently in real-time. So, you’d see companies make one video, realize how laborious it was, and walk lightly when planning to do it again. Given the advancements in cloud computing and mobile technology, it can be said that video is now easier to access and distribute at a higher quality than ever imagined. With that being said, expect to see video everywhere in 2012.”

Jason L. De Leon

“In 2012, I believe mobile computing will continue to grow as a trend. Near field communication, digital wallets, digital publishing, and mobile delivery will all be more powerful. I think we’ll see external outdoor billboards and the like blending with our mobile devices and showing us OUR ads, etc.”

Chris Brogan

Editor’s Note: This is the next in a series of articles on marketing technologies, authored by members of the SMPS National Technology Committee. 

About the Authors



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BREAKING NEWS

The December 2010 issue of *Marketer* has been selected as a winner in the American Graphic Design Awards sponsored by Graphic Design USA. Each year the American Graphic Design Awards competition recognizes new, outstanding graphic design, advertising art, and marketing communications created by American graphic designers and art directors.

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