From "INTERNET" to "SMART TECH" CAFÉ

PICTURE THIS: there is a single bus that stops by your house and you need to catch it. But it doesn´t run when you want so you try to change the schedule to suit your needs, only to find out that you've been left behind, out in the cold. This analogy approximates what lots of people are coming to find today: more activities and transactions possible only via the internet – and more: movies, music, articles, photos being downloaded in seconds; videos shared globally, instantly "live", airline, train, movie tickets bought and saved on your "smart" device…cold, hard cash never crossing your palm. How do you cope with new systems, new software? Are you beating up the keyboard, swearing at the screen or kicking your PC because "it" does not respond to your demands?   Or is it because you simply haven't kept up with the times? The cyber world in which we live is focused on speed, instant gratification, and shared information – no matter how much we want things to stay as they were, no matter how remote a place in which we live. We are being pushed at lightning speed into a fast and ever-changing era, an era that we see encompassing endless possibilities.

We see a real future where humans will become individual "dots" in the cyber universe: your medical test results determine that you qualify for a job or permanent residency; your "smart" device tells you your blood pressure has abruptly risen to a dangerous level while you were "Facetiming" someone, and automatically contacts the paramedics because your oxygen levels have seriously changed, and when help arrives, the doctor is prepared to handle your medical emergency. We expect all our personal data (not just documents and photos) to be stored on "cyber clouds" for easy access by those who need it. We foresee flat screens thinner than a sheet of paper that will recognize your fingerprint or read the retina of your eye and instantly bring you to your own virtual world that can be updated, changed or shared…with a smile. We see more devices (even entire glass walls) being purely tactile: tap the screen, view and do whatever you want on one screen. We see every "smart" device becoming lighter, more flexible and charged by mere light or Wi-Fi signal…but are you ready?

The problem begins when we find users hanging on to their "good old 'dumb' phone" or "computer" and things don't work as well as they used to. The old computer can and should be brought up to date in most cases, but the old phone has to be replaced so nostalgia goes out the window. A transitional period is upon us, and thus we see the traditional "Internet Café" evolving into the "Smart Tech Café" where people gather to learn the new ways, keep their devices current, and be taught and guided along the tumultuous sea of technological change.

Happy New Year and Welcome to "Smart" 2014!