Tech Horizons 2012

2012 is just around the corner, so what innovations might we expect in the tech marketplace? Human ingenuity is boundless and in computer technology there is no limit.

On the PC hardware side, get ready for super-thin, super-lightweight laptops (known as "Ultrabooks" whose aim is to be between a normal laptop and netbook/tablet, with some less than 1" thick and a 50 hr. battery life) – they´re not the cheapest but their performance is superior. More tablets and netbooks are on the way from every major PC manufacturer: the smaller and simpler, the better. Unencumbered mobility is the key to their success as tablets provide most of what normal people want out of a computer (e.g. more chefs/cooks are discovering that a tablet in the kitchen beats all the cookbooks on their shelves – they can watch tutorials, get recipes, ingredients' descriptions, and take their tablet to the market to shop). And get used to "touch panel" PCs....those keyboards and mice are soon to be antiquated. In the automotive area, we can expect more cars to be internet-capable....instant information wherever you may be driving. Many new TVs already come with internet-access so couch potatoes need not grab their laptops to go online....just use the remote control. The world of 3D vision is spreading – from the movie screen to your home TV and even personal viewer devices.....watching the world through rose colored glasses is no longer just a saying! Finally, on the mobile phone front, expect a meteoric rise in "Smartphone" technology: from internet access to purchasing and paying via direct debit – it can all be done by your handheld phone. Simplicity, mobility and easy access are in huge demand worldwide and "Smartphones" satisfy that demand. Finally, as mentioned in a previous article, "cloud computing" will gain momentum as it becomes more available so we will always be connected – one way or another.

When it comes to software, the major launch will be Microsoft´s **Windows 8** operating system which calls upon touch panel technology and a brand new approach to Windows....just when we were getting used to **Windows 7**! Regarding software programs and apps, we see a strong trend toward more community aspects, i.e. teaching skills (www.skillshare.com), information gathering (http://www.quora.com/about), easier online purchasing (https://www.dwolla.com/default.aspx, http://www.giftly.com/what-is-giftly), and interactive programs for seniors, kids and stay-at-home parents. Gaming software, in a class of its own, is involving more people every day.

As we enter a new tech year, the internet continues to evolve and grow, encompassing everything in its path. Young innovative minds are constantly at work all over the world, developing applications, programs and ways to make life easier for all....be it the medical, educational, scientific, or business professions. For the normal person, however, we end up reaping the benefits of all these minds having spent millions of hours and money researching and developing that small item we hold in our hand that can do so much. Welcome to another year of wonders in technology!