

COLUMNS

Storytelling and beaver dams: GoPro to Snap

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Karma catches up

By [Gary Schwartz](#)

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Drones and Spectacles sold by camera and video merchants. There is a strange expansion of LEGO-snapping services in the market. Both companies are empire building: GoPro launches a Karma Drone and Snap Inc. its camera glasses. Both companies are adding cloud and software services to make their storytelling services more accessible.

Here is my snap story on why they will succeed.

Dam digression

I need you to indulge me on an extremely circuitous although hopefully informative illustration of why the technology pancaking of services with a healthy portion of human-centered design are essential to drive market adoption.



Open to chat

I just finished Richard Dawkins' classic book, "The Extended Phenotype." Mr. Dawkins is a maverick scientist who is known for coining the word "meme" long before YouTube and Facebook existed.

Mr. Dawkins develop a concept in 1982 of how genes influence things beyond the body, namely "The Extended Phenotype."

A phenotype is simply how a gene or genotype affects its host. We know that genes lead to physical changes in the body: blue eyes, brown hair, dark skin.

Mr. Dawkins argues that genes also influence the world beyond the body.

A beaver dam, he explains, is as much a manifestation of the beaver's genetic map as the twigs and logs that the animal is compelled to hew, drag and cement into a dam structure.

So beaver genes make its hair brown and, indirectly, make very good dams.

Humans also have phenotypical behavior.

We adopt tools that extend our physical and social toolkit. We are compelled, like a beaver, to use data and information to outwit our opponents and impress our mates.

The phone is a perfect example of a physical extension of our pursuit of information.

The phone acts as a prosthetic tied to our hand, glued to our table, and always at-the-ready in our pocket. It is a data sword at the ready to search a fact and a shield we can place over our face in case we need to hide from the world.



Nailing the shot

Snap and go

Accordingly, it is safe to say that technology works well if there is a seamless connection between the service and the user.

We know programming the VCR is a barrier to adoption and successive generations of electronics have attempted to make hardware and software integrated and intuitive.

To do this, the service needs to be connected to users as an extension of their need to act, share and engage.

Having a social sharing service buried on a phonetop or having a social camera disconnected from our data cloud missed the essential connection between the act of being social and the act of recording and sharing social.

Snap's Spectacles allows the user to flail their arms, hug a friend, eat the content of the foodie and share this story with the community of 400 million daily picture and video messages to the Google cloud.

GoPro's Karma allows the user to fly the camera and seamlessly remove the Grip while filming and continue the story on land. All this content can be shared and edited online using GoPro "Quik" application.

BOTH COMPANIES are connecting the human to the service by filling in the gaps in the experience.

The company that creates a seamless and continuous journey from the need to share to the act of sharing will win.

For GoPro, it is camera-grip-drone-cloud.

For Snap it is spectacles-app-cloud.

Both extend the genetic imperative to be social with a physical suite that extends that human drive.

It is this snap-and-go architecture that will make these companies dominant players in the storytelling category.



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