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2024: Finding What Sticks

FEATURE ARTICLE

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Another year in review.

At the end of every year, we are granted the opportunity to look back and reflect. We assess our predictions, recount major events, and try to determine what the last 12 months will mean in the grander scheme of things. It's a familiar ritual – yet every time, I'm reminded of just how much information we're inundated with and how quickly we move on.

Take 2016 for example, a year dominated by discussions of Brexit and the controversial election of Donald Trump. While these events consumed global attention and reshaped the political landscape, that same year saw the introduction of the CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing tool – a revolutionary advancement in biomedical research and the coolest invention you've never heard of.

As I reflect on 2024, I find myself grappling with the challenge of distinguishing the fleeting moments of media hype from

those destined to shape our future. This year brought a surge of political drama, technological breakthroughs, and global crises, yet history reminds us that not all of them will stand the test of time.

Think back to 2010. A year devastated by the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. While its immediate environmental impact and media frenzy were undeniable, how often do you think of it today? In contrast, that same year saw the release of the iPad, an innovation that arguably altered the trajectory of consumer electronics and vastly modernized the lives of field service technicians around the world.

So what makes something “stick”? Politics and international events often matter profoundly in the short term, but their significance can evolve over time. Technology, however, has a unique staying power. Innovations often start small but

ripple outward, influencing not just industries but culture and everyday life. The introduction of smartphones in 2007 or the popularization of e-commerce with Amazon in the late 90s are prime examples.

To cut through the noise and focus on real transformation, I like to ask myself one question: *what from this year would have been unimaginable a decade ago?* For me, the answer lies in AI. Ten years ago, AI was a buzzword full of empty promises. Today, it's generating art, solving complex problems, and reshaping industries in ways we're only beginning to comprehend.

As we look towards the new year, let's be mindful of what we choose to remember and celebrate. The moments with staying power often reveal themselves in hindsight, but they're also worth searching for in the present.

After all, headlines alone don't change the world.

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