Here’s a global shift underway in the way companies compete, a shift driven partly by advances in telecommunications technologies that make many more options available for sourcing and distributing goods and services. Wireless and mobile technologies contribute substantially to “flattening” of the world. But there’s a less heralded and possibly more important way these technologies can operate: In support of creative activities. Jobs moving, geographically dispersed collaboration—these are the supply side, cost motivated side of the story of mobile business. The demand side, the story on the revenue side of the income statement, is about creativity and innovation, about new products and services and reaching new customers.

At long last we are witnessing a rapid convergence of telephony, computing, photography, media, gaming, and more. Soon, all handheld devices will be small computers capable of photography, web, browsing, telephony on mobile networks or the Internet (IP telephony), media/music players (including IP-Internet television), gaming consoles, and desktop work environments with office software. We think often of these many new toys and tools for productivity. Harder to imagine, however, are the new ways we will work, as new, rich communication capabilities allow us to interact and experiment more.

Writing in 1968, Internet pioneers J.C.R. Licklider and Robert W. Taylor, in “The Computer as a Communication Device,” wrote of the potential effects of the change that we are now seeing: “When minds interact, new ideas emerge. We want to talk about the creative aspects of communication.” Welcome, 40 years hence, to the continuation of this great conversation, about the possibilities that this technology convergence will open in the realm of all business, including services, retailing, media, entertainment, logistics, medicine and industry.

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