

Speed is the only vice invented by modern man

Aldous Huxley

moving @ e-speed

At the 1939 World's Fair in New York, visitors to the General Electric pavilion entered an auditorium containing two widely separated metal orbs, actually the poles of a huge van de Graaf generator. After a suitably dramatic buildup, the watchers were pleasantly terrified as a bolt of lightning, accompanied by a deafening thunderclap, jumped clear across the room above their heads.

What would those audiences of 60 years ago, watching the latest wonders of science, make of today's array of technological marvels? Microprocessors, satellites, lasers, fibre optics, wristwatch telephones, wireless networks spanning the planet - surely they'd have considered them purest science-fiction - Dick Tracy or Flash Gordon, and never likely to become a reality.

Today, most consumers calmly take such wonders for granted. But for those of us who produce as well as consume digital goods and services, and who know a little about what goes into them, "pleasantly terrified" may be the most appropriate response. In IT and e-business, the rewards of lightning-like action response are vast, but so are the risks.

Knowledge is power, however: to harness the lightning, you must understand it. Informed discussion with your colleagues (not to mention networking of the human sort) is essential.

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