Are We All Just Lazy? December 11, 2017

A. Michael Noll
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by William Dutton

December 13th, 2017

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How many of our new products and services are motivated mostly by our laziness? However, the marketing folks would claim that they are just making life easier for us.

Television sets of the past had tuners with knobs. To change a channel, we had to get up from our sofas and go to the TV set to turn the knob to a different channel. This was so much effort that we usually just left the TV set on a single channel for the entire evening. And then the TV remote was invented. Now we could relax in our sofas and simply press a button to flip from one channel to another – the height of laziness.

Today we have voice-assisted products. All we have to do is simply speak to it to obtain information or to turn on a lamp. No longer do we have to search the Internet by typing on a keyboard. We just speak to our computers and voice-assistants.

Decades ago, AT&T was attempting to market its video teleconferencing service. But people thought it was easier to take the train than to schedule and walk across the street to a teleconferencing room.

It takes physical energy and effort to speak – it can be tiring. Somehow it is easier just to type or text a message. Perhaps it simply takes less physical effort and is less tiring. But if we do not have a keyboard immediately available, then speech is the way to go.

A. Michael Noll

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One thought on “Are We All Just Lazy?”

William Dutton says: December 13, 2017 at 6:36 pm I am not sure it is lazy, as much as a cultural change. Some of my colleagues don’t even think about picking up the phone rather than sending a text or email. It is the new norm. I recall a thesis of a student of mine who looked at big data on Hi-Ovis project in Japan, which enabled households to use a remote, versus knob, and also provided more channels. The data we captured was dramatic in how the habit of using the remote took years, and slowly led to more channel switching. Maybe changing habits are a better notion than cultural change. Reply

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Maybe changing habits are a better notion than cultural change.

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