

Don't hang up on mobile tech just yet

Should those of us who work at the cutting edge of technology be worried? I keep on considering this when I see kids with a vinyl tucked under their arm. Jigsaws have been included in the UK's consumer price index due to booming sales as adults ditch their consoles for board games. It's a puzzle indeed.

My concern for the future of the techie was raised further by perhaps the biggest announcement in consumer technology so far this year. Okay, the new Samsung S8 is exciting some, but did any story gain as much traction as the unveiling of the revamped Nokia 3310?

I say 'revamped', but that usually suggests the reintroduction of a product with enhancements that put it ahead of the market. The Nokia 3310 won't threaten the S8 for wizardry. It's got a 2.4" colour(ish) display, a 2MP rear camera and a microSD slot. It's limited to 2G network technology that dates back to December 1991 which means it won't support many of the most basic modern apps.

Technology is not failing

It may not be a leisure gaming phone, but it offers asylum to those mobile users who – guess what – just want to make calls. They can also text on it. They can play Snake on it. They can enjoy a battery life of an incredible 30 days, and it will cost them just €49. Clearly it will tick a lot of boxes for those tech-exhausted consumers who aren't bothered about the S8's edge-to-edge screen and do not want Bixby's smart assistance, thank you very much.

Not everyone is averse to technology, in fact few are in my experience. I think essentially some people absolutely love their iPhone but might just need to be forced away from it on occasion. Sometimes you might want to watch the game or a movie on the TV, and maybe just avoid the temptation of checking Twitter, Instagram and the rest.

I'm sure the Nokia will appeal to many, but I disagree with anyone who believes its release is indicative of public antipathy towards the smartphone. Indeed, high demand for the new iPhone 7 model meant Apple sold a record 78.3 million units in the crucial Christmas quarter.

Technology is not failing, but we must be mindful of its failings. Smartphones are not popular because of their complexity, but because of their ease. Think about how Steve Jobs hated all those buttons on the early MP3 players, and made the first iPod so smooth and simple. This is true of

"Smartphones are not popular because of their complexity, but because of their ease"

software just as surely as hardware. In my opinion, betting companies too often clutter the user experience. The focus should be on developing a seemingly instinctive ability to elegantly give every individual user what they want.

Some might be excited about the Nokia, but my focus is on a number of pioneering advances. Most definitely I am enthused by new robust streaming protocols, which enable a cohesive, no-delay experience. Live sport in tandem with true live sports betting is no longer a dream. Finally, the second screen will be fully synchronised with the first.

It is not enough, of course, to simply create something new. Maybe there's a reason that no one's tried your idea before – maybe it's garbage! One must think long, hard and diligently about how they can disrupt the market. That's especially true in a crowded and competitive landscape. To be a success you must innovate, and separate yourself from the crowd. It can be lonely out there leading the pack though. You stand out a mile, but you might just win. ●

Metric Gaming's CEO believes the buzz surrounding the revamped Nokia 3310 does not mean the public is tiring of smartphone innovation

Words by | Martin de Knijff, CEO and founder, Metric Gaming