



Predictions can date rapidly, so it is unwise to delay setting them out. Here are more of Peter's thoughts on the future of communications.

### CONNECTION

Phone masts enable us to be connected (almost) anywhere we may be. 4<sup>th</sup> generation (4G) is being 'rolled out and should cover the country by 2014/15. It means all connections will be faster even if not the same speed everywhere. 5G is estimated to arrive by the year 2020. Soon all but the most remote locations will be connected and that will be on an 'always on' basis. Since his talk, BT have given notice of the demise of their 'dial-up' broadband service,

Meanwhile NFC (Near Field Connectivity) is now in use. It means your mobile device does not need to be connected physically, but needs only to be near the device it needs to connect to. As it is introduced some problems are showing up that need to be resolved.

Six years ago a patient in heart surgery was fitted with a titanium pacemaker that could monitor his heart action and download the data overnight to a mobile phone on his bedside. The phone would automatically connect to its base in Germany from anywhere in the world and upload the data for the records. The GPS positioning feature in the phone allowed the base to know within a few metres where he was on the planet and alert a local medical team for emergency attention if his heart gave him problems. Then it was cutting edge, now it's not unusual and who knows what will be possible a few years soon.

### KEYBOARD

Until recently it was necessary to press physical keys on a keyboard. Now small computers have virtual keyboards where you touch the picture of a key, thus eliminating a physical keyboard.

The keyboard might disappear as voice control improves to the extent that it can deal with regional accents or if you have a sore throat. There is a demand for speech control so it will continue to improving and will be fully accepted eventually.

### OPERATING SYSTEM

Several operating systems are available and vying to become **THE** one to be used.

**Windows 8** is new and opinion varies from superb to irritatingly different.

**Android** is doing well on many devices or 'platforms' in various 'flavours'.

**Ubuntu** is an open source operating system (and free). **OSX** is a further alternative.

It is difficult to construct a single system that will work equally well on all platforms and we will have to wait and see. Some-one will eventually discover a 'killer' improvement and surge ahead.

In June Peter observed that Nokia was nowhere in the mobile phone stakes. Now Microsoft is seriously looking at buying Nokia so that it can get in the game. See what I mean about predictions?