Post-PC = Post-Innovation?

Written by Marco Attard
 07 December 2011

Will the post-PC era bring about the end of digital freedom and the innovation? Jonathan Zittrain certainly believes so, in his essay in the MIT Technology Review-- "The Personal Computer is Dead."

Zittrain is a Harvard professor and co-director at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society. He says "we're seeing an unprecedented shift of power from end users and software developers on the one hand, to operating system vendors on the other... This is a little for the better, and much for the worse."

As the PC dwindles, a replacement emerges in the shape of iOS and its ilk. While the Big Brother-esque walled-garden model might "just work" by eliminating some of the more annoying aspects of PCs (viruses, spam, identity theft, crashes) security comes at a high cost-- freedom.

This is not the first time Zittrain portrays the Apple model as the enemy-- in the book "The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It" Zittrain blames the iPhone for killing the internet by turning it from "generative PCs attached to a generative network" to "appliances tethered to a network of control."

Of course Apple is not the only company hindering developer freedom-- Google uses a similar (if somewhat more open) model, while the Kindle Fire blocks applications outside the Amazon-approved app store.

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Microsoft never "had no role in determining what software would and wouldn't run on its machines, much less whether the content inside that software was to be allowed to see the light of screen." Meanwhile Apple blocked an iPhone app from Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Mark Fiore due to "content that ridicules public figures."

Could the company with the legendary "1984" commercial become Big Brother himself? That's a depressing possibility, unless "some angry nerds" start tearing the garden walls down.

Go [The Personal Computer is Dead (MIT Technology Review)](#)