

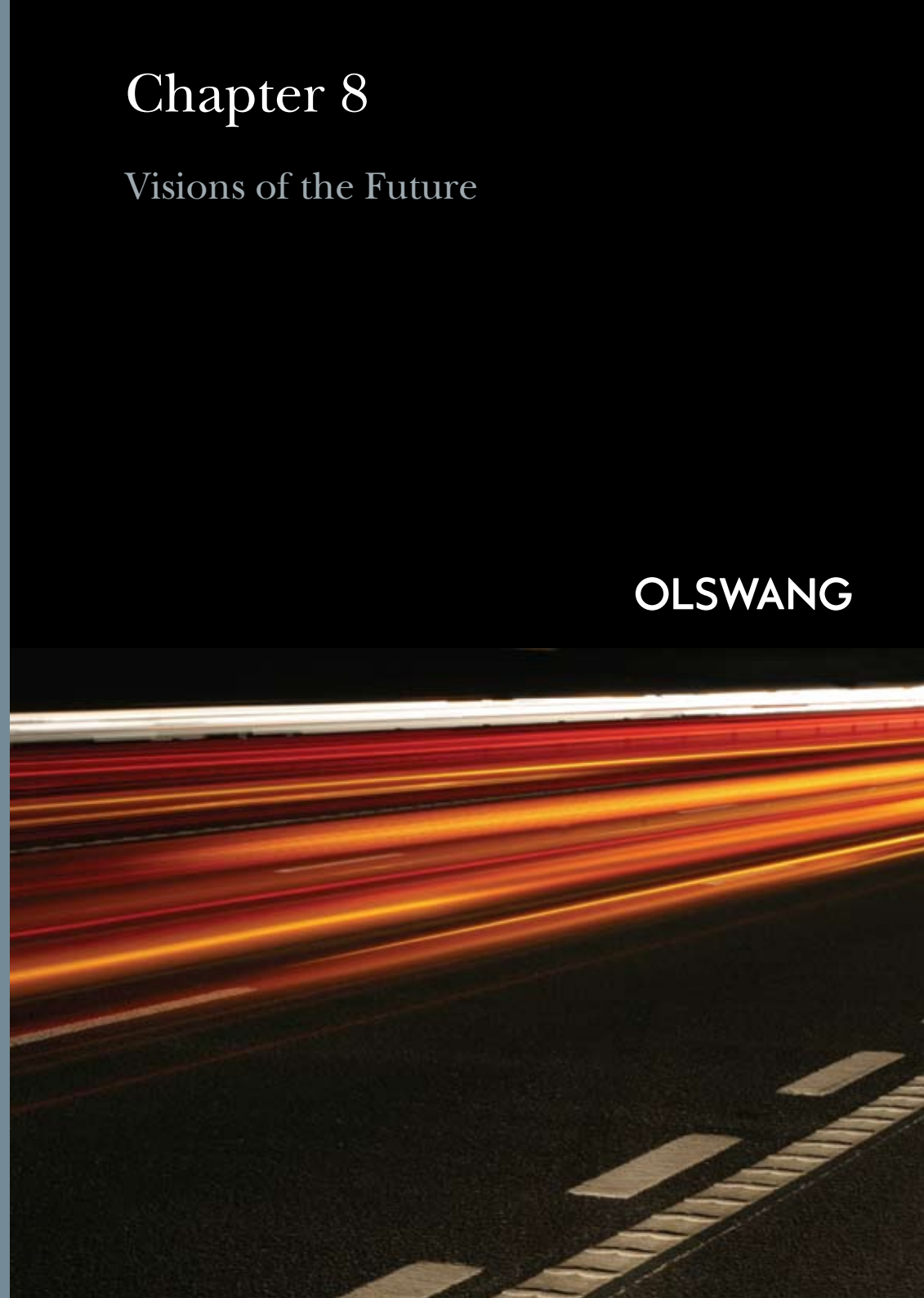
Chapter 8

Visions of the Future

“All online and you will be able to watch what you want when you want. You will have a central device that controls all of your entertainment”

(W, Tech Vanguard focus group)

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“Being able to access the internet from the living room main TV will be the next big thing for all users this will allow for a new market for downloading/streaming films”

The last thing that we asked both focus group participants and survey respondents to provide was a picture of the future and, in particular, how they saw the digital world – and their behaviour in it – changing⁶⁸.

Some of the suggestions were farfetched and, despite it getting three independent mentions, we are unlikely to place many bets on “retinal projection” or “watching TV in your own head without any screens” or “downloads direct from satellites to your eyes” being the next big thing.

Among the more serious analysis, it was notable that people often came up with completely opposed views on the future world - from the political:

“I think the government will finally give up preventing downloads and try to work with technology for a change.” (R, Kids focus group)

“They also might get stricker tho.’ (W, Kids focus group)

- to the mundane:

“I think they will have every TV show ready to watch at any time so u just select the show at any time and watch.” (Q, Kids focus group)

“I don’t see it changing a great deal.” (A, Kids focus group)

Some views were expressed relatively consistently – the survival of the cinema, the need to improve quality and download speeds and the need for the cost of many of these technologies to come down dramatically.

⁶⁸ It will be noted that not all quotes in this section are ascribed to our four demographic groups: this segmentation was not possible for quotes provided by respondents to the quantitative research.

Here are some of our favourite observations:

First, many of our respondents believe (as we do) that there will be a box, linked to a large screen and to the internet, that will form the hub of many people's viewing experience:

"All online and you will be able to watch what you want when you want. you will have a central device that controls all of your entertainment."

"I think if the BBC or someone provided some kind of set top box to watch iPlayer etc on that would change my habits more." (A, Tech Vanguard focus group - pre-empting by several weeks Erik Huggers' announcement of Project Canvas (discussed above))

"Having TVs with built-in media players and being able to use your remote control to download straight from the internet to your TV."

"Being able to access the internet from the living room main TV will be the next big thing for all users this will allow for a new market for downloading/streaming films."

Second, a number of people see that a handheld device will be central to this one-box media solution (based on the data we have accumulated over our four annual surveys, we are less convinced of this):

"Mobile phones will play a huge role in both playing and storing entertainment."

"like using my mobile to listen to music so would like to watch tv etc on mobile phones in 5 years."

...but not all respondents share this view of the mobile device, at least as regards audiovisual content:

"Media Hub in home linked wirelessly to PC network, storage, HDTV plus Sky+ (or similar), Freeview or Freesat (from the BBC). Music centre linked in hopefully including iPod docking. Would like this in multiple rooms if possible. Mobile device to keep music on that doubles as phone and mobile office. Not so bothered about viewing streamed video to mobile device."

Third, the death of the schedule is repeatedly announced – with some exceptions...

"Maybe they'll become a time when TV schedules won't exist. Technology moves fast."

"I still think sport and other landmark programmes will need a schedule. It wouldn't be the same for programmes like the apprentice if you couldn't talk about it with people."

"I've never really been into regular TV. Watching TV for TV sake. I'd rather being doing stuff and watch what I want when I want, so once streaming/downloading is as good as it can be, I'll prob stop watching scheduled TV."

Fourth are those who have perhaps too much faith in technologists:

"Downloading times will not exist in the future, it will be on demand like iplayer but in HD quality."

"I think you will have one machine that is TV DVD computer radio, it will do 3d and surround sound, have a web cam, and prob be voice activated. maybe with an inbuilt coffee machine or beer dispenser (joke, but who knows)."

Fifth is the future of music – an endorsement for those, such as Nokia and its recently launched Nokia Comes With Music service, that are offering “all you can eat” propositions, with the added expectation of streaming taking precedence over downloading:

“I can see the streaming of music increasing. It is a good way to try before buying and opens up your experience to all sorts of music I may not have looked at.”

“If you wanted to listen to a show you had to tune in at a certain time on a radio. Now you can listen on Freeview, Radio, DAB, stream online, download online and then listen on your PC or ipod. The content is more important than the medium to consume it.”

“I expect a pay per month system soon to be widely available, if not already. Where you are allowed to download X amounts per day. Your files will be available via the web to be played via any music player within your car, computer, house etc CD's will totally disappear in 5-10years I believe.”

“I hope that sites like I tunes will start to offer monthly subscription to download unlimited songs or x amount per month.”

“Let's face it, if Terry Wogan has a podcast.....”

And finally, there are those who really, quite honestly, would rather pull a blanket over their heads and wait for this whole convergence thing to go away:

“I really don't like the idea of constantly having TV at your fingertips.”

“I think it's a good 'back-up' system to watch those shows that you really would miss. But mainly I think people will stick to watching to show 'live'.”

“Family viewing might become a thing of the past. I can see from when I was a child...less choice of channels/ no internet/no 'puter games kept the family unit together. In our house now, my other half will be on his 'puter and me on mine. We only watch TV together when it's something we really want to watch. God, we sound like right sados, don't we? LOL.”

“Hopefully it will be technology will be much simpler and cheaper for us some of us so called technophobes, and won't change so often, I sometimes feel I can't keep up.”

“5 years is such a long time with the current acceleration of technology so hard to say. But I 'spect I'll still say there's nowt i want to watch on telly!”



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