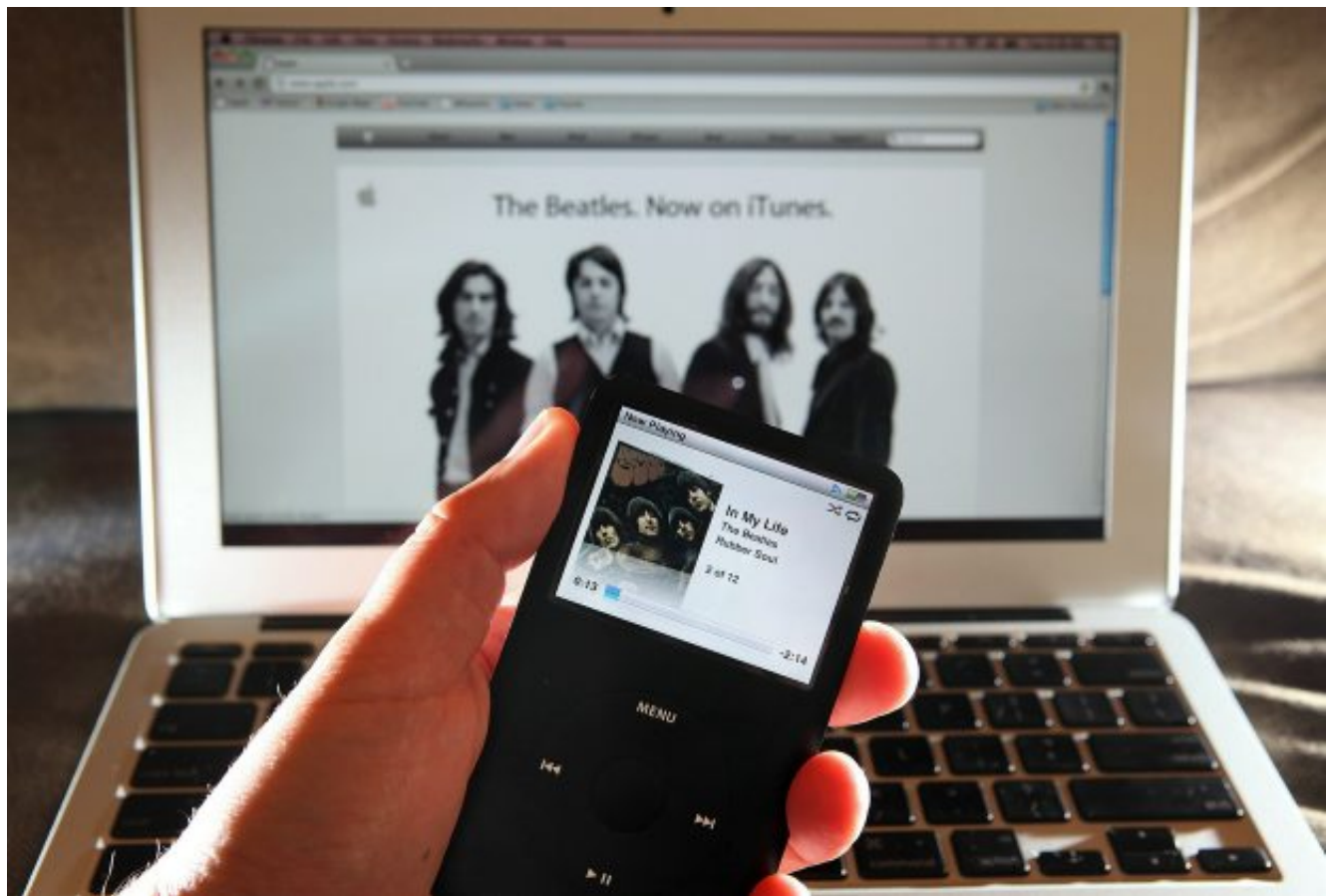


Transmission shifts up

Rapid changes in marketplace force changes in upcoming Victoria conference

BY MIKE DEVLIN, TIMESCOLONIST.COM FEBRUARY 8, 2011



How we gain access to music, and how we pay for it, if at all, are among the many topics being discussed at this week's Transmission conference on digital technology. The three-day event begins today in Victoria with a series of talks and concerts at venues throughout the city.

Photograph by: ., GETTY IMAGES

Technology moves fast. Summits and symposiums centred on technology have to move even faster.

Transmission, the annual think-tank conference produced and programmed by Victoria's Fan Tan Group, has retooled its content and approach to reflect the way digital content is created, presented and processed in 2011.

Fundamental shifts in technology move at a clip measured in months, not years. As a result, the shape of the conference, which gets underway at various venues this week, had to reflect those changes, said Transmission co-founder and executive producer Tyl van Toorn.

"You can see a flip of perspective in technology in under six months," he said. "We had to change our thinking, too."

Transmission's fifth edition begins tonight with the transmitLIVE festival, which includes a reception

and concert at the McPherson Playhouse, followed by music and multimedia installations at Club 9ONE9 and the lounge at the Hotel Rialto. Additional venues, including Sugar nightclub and the Legacy Art Gallery on Yates Street, will host transmitLIVE events on Thursday and Friday nights. The musical events are open to the public (see sidebar).

The idea-generating aspect of Transmission will occur during two days of speeches and round-table discussions at the Inn at Laurel Point. Representatives from the mobile, gaming, film, television, publishing and music industries will attend keynote speeches given by everyone from Eric Baptiste, the director general of the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada, to David Neale, vice-president of special projects for BlackBerry maker Research in Motion.

It is during these closed-door events that the 150 invited delegates from around the world, including representatives from Google, Amazon and Microsoft, will participate in what van Toorn calls "a mutually beneficial dialogue."

He considers these talks an investment in the future.

"Everyone will come away with an enhanced network and a better understanding of the players in the digital content delivery business, and a better understanding of how people relate to that content. The issue is no longer about creating products. It is about the psychology of how you consume and interrelate with content, which is an involved process."

There's a big focus on the future at Transmission, and how shifts in technology affect all consumers and creators of digital content — not just at home in Canada, but around the world.

Two round-table discussions (one hosted by a group from China; the other, by a pair of groups from Israel) are dedicated exclusively to those issues, van Toorn said.

During the 2009 edition of Transmission, a big point of interest involved the licensing of content via Internet service providers. That topic accounts for only a small portion of this year's conference, proving just how fast technology is advancing, and how far we've come with regard to the hot-button debate over peer-to-peer sharing, van Toorn said.

"Transmission was almost exclusively about music in the past, but we've migrated towards a creative industries focus. It is no longer a music problem; it is a music and video and television and publishing problem. If you look online, music is a very small percentage of what is being downloaded."

Van Toorn quoted a recent survey that broke down, by content, the top 10,000 torrent files available for sharing. Movies accounted for 35 per cent of the files being downloaded. Music, meanwhile, ranked near the bottom, with a meagre 2.9 per cent piece of the pie.

Thanks to faster download speeds and greater access to content, both legal and illegal, companies have become more efficient at providing content at the consumer level. That has left the debate wide open when it comes to what medium, company or individual will emerge as the leader in making money from digital content.

Transmission plays a key role in that debate. "We work a networking service," van Toorn said. "We connect people on issues they never knew needed solutions."

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Who's performing at this year's event

TONIGHT

Jets Overhead with Maurice

McPherson Playhouse, 7 p.m. \$17.50

Longwalkshortdock with Poirier featuring Face T, Egyptrixx, Humans, Longshanks, and G.I. Blunt

Club 9ONE9, 9 p.m. \$15

Digital Media Installations by New Forms Festival and Canadian Film Centre Media Lab

Hotel Rialto, 9 p.m. Free

THURSDAY

Sweatshop Union with Keys N Krates, Bonjay, Cityreal, Half Moon Run, and DJ Wood

Club 9NONE9, 7:30 p.m. \$15

Love Dancing, DJ Eames, and Digital Media Installations by New Forms Festival and Canadian Film Centre Media Lab

Hotel Rialto, 6 p.m. Free

FRIDAY

Digital Media Installations with Apok Industries, Geva Alon, and Todor Kobakov (classical piano set with string quartet)

Legacy Art Gallery, 7 p.m. Invitation Only

Jules Chaz with Geva Alon and Digital Media Installations by New Forms Festival and Canadian Film Centre Media Lab

Hotel Rialto, 6 p.m. Free

Max Ullis with Michael Red, Calamalka, Daega Sound, and Rythmicon featuring Ian from dUbTeT.
Sugar Nightclub, 10 p.m.

Free before 11 p.m. with a Transmit Live wristband

Tickets for all events can be purchased at the McPherson Box Office, Ditch Records, Lyle's Place, Strathcona Hotel, and ticketweb.ca. More information: transmitnow.com/transmission2011/festival/schedule

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