

## Stones, Caves and Smoke - Steve, Pablo and Mark

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No doubt, Steve Jobs would have been humbled on holding the perfect design and functionality of a pre-Homo Sapiens flint knife in one hand – while in the other hand, his beautiful iPhone.



Technology was born more than 3.3 million years ago in Kenya with the first crude stone tools made by hominins<sup>1</sup>, lower down the family tree than the genus, Homo and our species, Homo Sapiens, famous for making cutting edge information tools.



We have learned nothing in 20,000 years\*

When the most modern artistic communicator, Pablo Picasso, first saw the famous primitive cave art in the Lascaux Cave in southwestern France, he exclaimed: “We have learned nothing in 20,000 years.” \* Not even with Adobe as the Illustrator.

Messaging ideas on walls can be traced back 40,000 years to the oldest cave paintings discovered in Indonesia<sup>2</sup>. They were created by Homo Sapiens, who have extended the

concept to diverse canvases and forms, from signs, billboards, graffiti art, and the TV screen, to today's ubiquitous, mobile digital surfaces.



The medium is the message.\*

Mark Zuckerberg stands on the shoulders of a long line of social engineers when he connects a billion of us on Facebook in microseconds. This new medium and all its cousins has indeed become the message, as Canada's Marshall McLuhan realized 50 years ago.

Social media transmissions originated as fire and smoke signals in ancient China around 700 BC.<sup>3</sup> Soldiers could relay the warning of an attack over 300 miles in a few hours by signaling from tower to tower along the Great Wall. Today, news from war zones, messages of love and comments about every human condition now rise as invisible smoke from cell towers and reappear to us in the cloud.

What necessity will be the mother of the next invention?

It took 3.3 million years for man to develop information tools, the digital wall and the global connectome, which together define modern human society. If necessity is the mother of invention, what new challenges for survival, communications and global harmony will arise to mother - yet more exotic social inventions? What will the next generation of children of Microsoft, Apple, and Silicon Valley look like? Looking back,

there appear to be no limits to human creativity and our ability to innovate? Can we make anything better?

As we continue to chip away in the process of evolution, let's keep it humble. Plants have been using solar power for more than 3 billion years. There is nothing new under the sun.

1. <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v521/n7553/full/nature14448.html>
2. <http://www.livescience.com/48199-worlds-oldest-cave-art-photos.html>
3. <http://thehistoryofmedia.weebly.com/smoke-signals.html>

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