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Joe: *Welcome everyone. This is Joe Dager, the host of the Business901 podcast. With me today is Kevin Kelly. Kevin helped launch Wired magazine and was its executive editor for its first seven years. He has written for seemingly every publication, and his previous books include Out of Control, The New Rules for the New Economy, Cool Tools, and What Technology Wants. His present position is described as the Senior Maverick at Wired, and author of the new book, The Inevitable.*

Kevin, welcome to the podcast and besides having fun, was what does a Maverick at Wired do?

Kevin: It bosses around the junior mavericks, I guess. The whole idea is I am a dotted line to the side. I get to basically research and write one big think piece a year. Otherwise, I have no operational duties, whatsoever.

Joe: *You've been around the internet for a long time, I would say. How does that experience help you forecast technology trends and how does it maybe hinder you too?*

Kevin: That's a really great question. I look for where technology reveals its true colors, which I think is wherever it's either misused, abused, unsupervised, and that's sort of

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basically where the criminals use it, where the kids use it, and where it's being sued for free or non-commercially, and where it's in some ways, not being used the way it was invented for. I think in those kind of margins is where we get to see where technology wants to go because it's not being hindered by our preconceptions.

Joe: *Does it hinder you at all? Because I mean we build these mental models of what it's supposed to be and in forecasting, sometimes you have to break your own mental model, don't you?*

Kevin: Exactly. That's what I'm suggesting is that we have the official futures that we imagine for things, and then there's actually the way people use them. I'm reminded of in the early days of Wired, maybe around 1995, at that time I uncovered a survey of what people expected to do on the web, which had just been invented a couple of years before and one of the computer magazines had done this. They said, what are you going to use this thing, which was still very unpopulated. At the top of this was kind of like electronic voting, voting in elections, like virtual democracies and then there was going to be for education and for research, looking up and finding facts. Then there was something socially uplifting. I went down the list and at the bottom of the list was like, oh I might play some games on it, or there might be porn, or there might be sports scores or something. And so whites happened is that reality has flipped that completely and so the things that people that they were going to use us for, and even designers were designing it all wrong, and you could get a lot better understanding of what it was actually going to be used for by looking at the last things on the priority list, which was actually what people wanted to do with it. I think by looking at the margins, you have a much better idea of where the center is going to go.

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Joe: *To me, it reminds me of the type when you go out and look at the customer using your product and the workarounds that he uses to use it and to me that kind of makes sense because that's where we got our ideas, to extend our product and develop our product more, right?*

Kevin: Exactly. They even have a codified term these days for having the consumer or the user define or even co-create the product. The term is often called 'prosumers.' It's the producers and the consumers being the same people; which was a term by the way that was invented by Alvin Toffler in the 80's. Alvin Toffler, the futurist who just died a couple days ago. So, it's a term that has been around the notion of relying your customers to help you co-create the products that they're using has a long genesis, but these new technologies really do enable that to happen, such that your customers are kind of hacking the things that you made, but if you can actually formally use that to capture those changes and those redesigns and make that a formal process so that in fact, customers are co-designing, and co-creating, and co-financing with places like Kickstarter, the very products that you're selling, and I think that's now regarded as a very legitimate cycle or process for even established companies and not just your kind of experimental startups.

Joe: *Your new book, The Inevitable, talks about understanding the 12 technology forces that will shape our future. And I always kind of pride being somewhat of a system's thinker or whatever, but when I looked at that, I sat back, and I looked at those 12, and that was like, that's a lot of information and I started grouping them and clustering them together, and just playing around with them a little bit, because there is a lot there I guess.*

Kevin: And there are fairly arbitrary categories. Just for the benefit of the readers, there are 12 forces, 12 megatrends, and I labeled them all with verbs or actually gerunds.

They're on-going motions, and I call them directions. So they're like 12 general forces, directions in the next 20 to 30 years, which is the time horizon, and they're all on-going and also, by the way, they're all interdependent upon each other. And those forces, I call them inevitable because they're inherent, and they're derived from the very nature of the bits and the chips and the wires and electrons. They're recurring, kind of independent of what human institutions do with them. They're going to show up again and again. And these are large forces, and I'm not trying to predict the specifics, the particular, which I think are inherently unpredictable.

The way that I would make an analogy is the telephone was inevitable. Once you invented electricity and wires, you're going to have telephones. But, the iPhone was not. Telephones are inevitable, but iPhone was not. The internet was inevitable, but Twitter was not. The specifics aren't. The species are not at all predictable. And those specifics are something that we have a lot of control over and make a huge difference to us. I also use the analogy like gravity, in the sense that if you have rain falling into a valley, the path of a particular drop as it goes down to the river is unpredictable. The specific path is completely unpredictable, but the direction is inevitable, which is down. I'm talking about those general directions, **and they are increased smartness, the cognifications, there's increased tracking, there are more and more things tracked because these things are built to track and they are inherently going to track. There's an increased shift from owning**

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