



**Simon Hudson, CloudRaker**

# When Our Intuition Starts to Fail Us



**SIMON HUDSON:** *Your job is to go swimming in the noise to find signals, and then to pull those signals out and figure out how to teach them. What are the current signals saying about technology?*

**RICK BARAZZA:** The number of transistors on a single microchip has now passed the 7 billion mark. We've hit that corner in an exponential curve where things are getting really weird, really fast. All of a sudden, the computation that's required to power the types of experiences we've grown accustomed to, even as quickly as we expect new things, now represents only a sliver of all computational potential. It's something on the order of 20%.

**SIMON HUDSON:** *So, where is all of that extra computation and energy going if we're not seeing it as consumers right now?*

**RICK BARAZZA:** It's not just sitting there. The extra computational potential has been going into the creation of Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and Mixed Reality experiences. It's been going into Artificial Intelligence and Zero UI interfaces. Consumers will start to see this largely invisible realm begin to materialize over the next 18 to 24 months.

**SIMON HUDSON:** *In what ways are we going to feel that?*

“Right now, what’s needed is a tremendous amount of exploration and experimentation.”

**RICK BARAZZA:** We need to begin thinking about dimensionality in our interfaces. 3D interfaces are beginning to crop up, a fact that will clearly wield a big influence on the future of experience design and potentially confound designers stuck in a 2D mindset. We also have 1D experiences coming online where there’s actually nothing visual at all. No screens with pretty pictures under glass. We’re talking about using voice and speech recognition to interact with machines via Artificial Intelligence (AI) in new and previously unimaginable ways. The design intuition that made us so successful under one paradigm, becomes obsolete and holds us back when there are fundamental shifts in that paradigm. If you’re at the leading end of anything, it’s paramount that you continually question your instincts and focus on what’s next, lest you run the risk of becoming outdated when the ground shifts beneath your feet.

**SIMON HUDSON:** *What would you recommend to UX designers if they want to start retooling themselves for this brave new world? What are people doing to gain experience with 1D and 3D interfaces? Or do we just fire them all and find a new generation of talent?*

**RICK BARRAZA:** Anybody who is saying, “Here’s the definitive answer” or “You must learn this particular tool” is probably just trying to sell you something.

Right now, what’s needed is a tremendous amount of exploration and experimentation. You really want to start looking at this stuff now because it represents a fundamental shift in computation and creativity, just like the Internet was, and along the lines of what mobile started to be.

We need to brace ourselves for a major quake that will issue in a post PC and post mobile future. That future will be characterized by a seismic shift in how we interact with technology.

***About the author:** Rick Barazza, Microsoft’s Senior Technical Evangelist, explores the intersection of design and emerging experiences. He’s always a little afraid of getting fired for what he says, but stands behind all of it and wants to be clear he isn’t speaking for Microsoft. His current concern: Our design intuitions will soon be leading us astray.*

*Illustration by UK-based illustrator, [Owen Gent](#)*

