

Words Poorly Used #134 — Convergence

People in the technology trades these days are insisting that we are experiencing “convergence.” At TechTarget.com, the following definition is offered:

DEFINITION

technological convergence

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-ComputerWeekly.com

In general, convergence is a coming together of two or more distinct entities or phenomena. Technological convergence is increasingly prevalent in the information technology world; in this context, the term refers to the combination of two or more different technologies in a single device.

In the textbook from which I am teaching now, we find —

digital convergence The use of a single unifying device to handle media, Internet, entertainment, and telephony needs; expressed in the range of devices now on the market.

— but this is an out-of-date idea. It goes back to Vannevar Bush in the FDR administration. Today, we are not experiencing convergence on a neatly designed technology with smooth edges and a finished inclusion of all future features. Rather what we are seeing is **divergence**. Let me add that the word does not contemplate separation into specialized parts. It sees technology as a Mandelbrot Pattern, ever branching, ever reaching into new territory, ever displaying new looks.

— Kilgore Forelle