

The Tablet PC, how well does it fess up with Kay's Dynabook?

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ABSTRACT

Alan Kay's Dynabook vision predicted the development of lightweight portable personal computers as a learning aid for children. However a comparison of the Tablet P.C with the Dynabook indicates we are still a long way off from Kay's vision, highlighting the need for more sophisticated education that provides a deeper understanding and application of computing technology.

Keywords: Dynabook, Tablet PC, Human Computer Interaction, Education

Thirty Years of WHAT?

While the Computer manufacturers (Compaq, Toshiba, etc) celebrate their version of Alan Kay's Dynabook through the tablet P.C, we must ask if we the masses have real cause for celebration. Are we really using the technology to realise the full capabilities of the computer or have we not advanced that much from the original concepts of the 1970's & 80's.

The ability to make portable computers that can be used like a piece of paper is now a possibility, however Kay's primary goal of offering accelerated learning styles through high levels of computer interaction seems to have escaped manufacturers.

These developers continue to develop extremely high powered piece of technological machinery not for the user to develop their own unique sensory and interaction experience on but for the more mundane tasks such as word processing. How dramatic a change is this, how much closer are we to computer literacy?

Although we may think we have created the Dynabook by moving technically closer to some of Kay's basic visions (portable computers that can be used like pieces of paper), our computer literacy doesn't seem to have changed at the same rate. This point can be backed up by Kay's comments in *The Dynabook Revisited* interview when he stated "Now you've got millions and millions of people who think that doing even the most trivial things on a computer is a sign of computer literacy."

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