

[Don't Throw out that Spinning Disk Purchase Order Yet](#)

Wait, what? Isn't Flash the only future? Isn't cloud-native the only way to develop applications? Isn't [future of IT product] the only real solution?

It's time for a quick little health check on the IT ecosystem. Before we start, I have to admit that I do lean forward with regards to technology. The reason is that I've witnessed countless technologists and organizations alike get caught out as technology passed them by and they were left scrambling to catch up.

As you'll see when we wrap this quick little article, there is a reason I brought this up.

[insert IT product] of the future!

Whenever we look for the next big thing, and trust me, we are all doing it in one way or another, we tend to look a little too far down the road. Whether it's the pundits (me included) or the analysts, there is a need to have the 5 year crystal ball so that we make the appropriate decision now.

A very important practice I was reminded of when discussing upcoming features that are on a road map, is that when you talk about what's coming before it is available, it tends to slow down the buying cycle. People may be willing to hang on a little longer for that feature that you are touting.

We know this as the Microsoft/Oracle/VMware/[many vendors] vaporware approach that has disappointed us so many times in the past.

The storage industry, we are told, is at an inflection point. Let's roll back the calendar 10 years. The storage industry, 10 years ago, was at an inflection point. Here's a hint...in 5-10 years it will be at an other inflection point. The same could be said for the network industry, the software industry, the hypervisor market.

We are always at an inflection point. What is often forgotten about is that the long tail of legacy also preserves its place in the industry for much longer that it is often described.

I titled this article in relation to many folks who are looking to abandon spinning disks for flash arrays and all-flash architectures across the board. We have been told about how that is the inevitable future. Don't get me wrong, there is a massive shift happening in data centers around the world. Flash storage is a phenomenal tool in the IT toolbox to bring us to a new generation of storage. It does not, however, stop the massive traditional magnetic storage market which has a long life left in it.

Will our future predictions of today look as crazy as the future views in Popular Science used to? Back when they were published, it seemed like it was where things were going. Watch this and tell me if we got there:

Beta lost the war in the late 1980s, so why did it just die in 2016?

If you've been around long enough, you may remember the [Beta versus VHS standards war](#). More recently we saw a similar battle over the DVD standards where Blu-Ray won out over HD-DVD. The

reason that this is important is that it was only just announced that [Betamax tape production will end next year in 2016 according to sources](#).

The long tail of legacy has been proven out in many aspects of IT. While we like to blame the luddite mentality for hanging on to a lot of legacy technology and methodologies, the reality is that each of those legacy technologies serve a distinct purpose.

The world of technology is moving into the cloud, onto flash storage, up the stack to containers and PaaS, and the open source alternatives to the traditional incumbent vendors are taking hold and growing. It is very certainly a shift, but we also have a long time before we evacuate the data centers of hardware just yet.