

## 2011 – A Year in Review, part I

Well, 2011 is now in the history books. If the Mayans are correct, this could be our last hurrah on this blue-green rock, so we have to make the most of 2012. However, it is traditional to pause at the beginning of a new year and take a look back. So, over the next month, here we have the AVDawn Year in Review – a timeline of some of the top tech stories that hit us in 2011. And by us, I mean AVDawn, MrAVDawn and the AV industry overall.

January's biggest tech news story, at least in the AVDawn household was the announcement on January 10th that the Chevy Volt won North American Car of the Year, beating the other finalists – the Nissan Leaf and the Hyundai Sonata. Now, you must understand, MrAVDawn is a massive Volt fanboy. I mean, this man has been following news on this car for years now... since first whispers of the car hit the general populace. He visits Volt chat rooms and forums. He plays 'spot the Volt in the wild' while on trips. He put us on a Volt waiting list TWO years ago. Suffice to say, he's enamored. And, having participated in a Volt test-drive with him in Washington, DC, this time last year, I must admit that I'm becoming a fan as well. It's a good-looking car, with a sleek and tech-geek-friendly interior. It handles really well, and makes CRAZY miles per gallon numbers – always a plus with today's high gas prices. So, January 2011 belongs to the Volt.

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The big news in February 2011 was the introduction of the iPhone to the hordes of Verizon Wireless users. So heavy was demand for the Verizon iPhone, all Verizon first-day-sales records were shattered in the first two hours of pre-sales... which occurred between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. on February 4th and were only open to current Verizon subscribers. Now, MrAVDawn and I are Verizon people but not iPeople, so this story didn't have an immediate impact on us (other than radically increasing lines at our local Verizon store!) but because this was a huge tech story, iPhone on Verizon rates the February slot in my 2011 In Review.



March 2011 brought us a revamped iPad2 and the 4G HTC Thunderbolt – both major stories – but the biggest tech story of March, to my view, was the incredible 8.9 magnitude earthquake and subsequent tsunami that devastated Japan on March 11th. In the wake of the disaster, Sony, Sharp, Panasonic and other AV manufacturers stopped production for days to assess the damage. Panasonic had some injured workers in the temblor, and many AV equipment manufacturers were affected by supply chain issues as a result of the damage to factories in the quake/tsunami affected zone. Of course, the worst part of the event was not its impact on the AV industry and our equipment – it was the sad loss of over 15,000 human lives.

April brought another plethora of noteworthy tech stories, but I think the most important was the Apple lawsuit against Samsung for patent infringement over the Galaxy 4G phone and Galaxy Tab tablet. Throughout the month, Apple threw claims against Samsung for infringement in the U.S. – the Galaxy phone and tablet really \*do\* resemble their iCounterparts – and Samsung responded with a slew of counterclaims in South Korea, Japan and Germany. Earlier in December, a U.S. judge ruled that there is merit to Apple's claims and put the case up for trial next year, but that Samsung could continue selling the Galaxy products until then. Samsung even managed to have an injunction against Galaxy sales in Australia overturned. Adhering to the "Any press is good press" mantra, Samsung released ads in Australian papers last month proclaiming, "The Tablet Apple Tried to Stop – It's Time to TAB!" This story will be keeping our attention through the slated trial next year AT LEAST, but it all started back in April, 2011.



Again, May brought us a number of tech stories of note, but the biggest (from an AV point of view) was the announcement that Microsoft bought Skype for \$8.5 billion. Why do we care again? Well, the ease of use and free-usage model of Skype has made it a serious force in desktop video chatting among many of our corporate clients. Often we'd pitch a VTC system to smaller companies and hear, "What makes this better than Skype? Skype's free!" in response. So, the news that Microsoft bought the internet calling/chat company made some waves. Will Skype remain free? Will Skype remain easy to use? How badly will Microsoft change this/mess this up? These questions were on everyone's mind. Well, OK. So far so good, as there have been no MAJOR changes to Skype... yet. But the impact of this purchase may be felt long down the road. Time will tell.

June brought us a number of tech stories including the death of the Tesla Roadster and the birth of Google+. The top story for AV, however, was the mass influx of 33,001 AV Professionals to Orlando, Florida, for InfoComm 2011 – The Center of It All. This annual pilgrimage to the ProAV mecca was the top-attended show EVER in Orlando. (The biannual appearance of the show in Las Vegas is traditionally bigger and better-attended because, well, it's VEGAS, BABY!) All the big manufacturers and countless small ones exhibited on the show floor, bringing their shiniest new toys to show off. Classes – provided by InfoComm, Syn-Aud-Con, NSCA, IMCCA, and dozens of manufacturers – provided industry training, business and marketing tips, and continuing education credits for all attendees who took advantage of some of the industry's top professionals teaching. And, of course, we networked, had meetings, got swag and went to parties. As a rule, in the AV world, nothing tops InfoComm in June!



Six months down, six to go! Tune in for my next column to check out the tech highlights of the latter half of 2011.

*Dawn Meade, CTS – also known as AVDawn – is an industry veteran with experience in integration, AV sales, and social media. You can find her on Twitter at <http://www.ravepubs.com/avdawn>, on her AV tech blog, and of course, here at rAVe as a staff writer and as part of the rAVe BlogSquad.*

