

TUESDAY MORNING (KIND OF): ASSEMBLY- REQUIRED FUTURE

Sorry, gang, I've got a lot of balls in the air today and not much time to write. I'll try to come back as time permits to flesh out this post but no promises.

I've been thinking a lot about the future – apart from the political realm, because that part of our future is just plain bat-shit crazy – and I don't know, nothing seems clear. My crystal ball reads like a shattered Apple iPad display.

Take a look at this new phone concept, Google's Project Ara. Users can assemble the components they want or need at any time. In fact, I'd go so far as to say it's not a phone at all. It's a new mobile computer platform with communications capability. We'll accept it more readily if we think of it as a phone first, though, especially since we have yet to fully grasp how our current smartphones have replaced PCs.

Do enough people want a customizable device like this badly enough to merit all the effort put into its R&D?

If you're a parent, you've probably stepped barefoot on a LEGO piece in the middle of the night; imagine instead stepping on your kid's camera component for their Ara. Or the baby swallowing one of the components. Or the cat flicking off the dresser a key part you needed with all your spreadsheets for work.

Color me skeptical.

The impending decision in the *Oracle v. Google* lawsuit over Java's open-source license may also play a critical role. Not because Ara's technology may be released as open source, but because a negative outcome in the lawsuit may have a chilling effect on development by

component makers. If every company participating in the Java development community (prior to Oracle's acquisition of Sun Microsystems) believed Java was open source, BUT the court thinks otherwise, what good are any other assurances that any technology is open source?

As usual, morning threads are open. Talk amongst yourselves. What's the future look like in your crystal ball?