

## Elon Musk Is Teaching Us How To Love Tech Again

Is anyone seriously as excited about the new Samsung Galaxy S9? Did anyone even notice?



“Better video coming soon, but it would look a bit like this,” says Elon Musk in a tweet a few days ago.

He must be joking. That video is the most exciting thing we’ve seen in a long time. It shows a pavement and just a few people (looks like between six and ten) in a pod the size of a small bus on a pavement. The pod is lowered directly into the ground and passes along an underground tunnel, driverlessly, at speed, passing smoothly along through a series of tunnels, elevating and descending to different levels. It is like nothing we’ve ever seen before. Previous images of hyperloops have been of larger trains, usually departing from large stations.

Remember when the first iPhone was launched? When the iPad came out, and the iPhone 4, the first phone with a really decent camera and the first with a retina, high PPI display? It was exciting, right?

Likewise, remember the buzz when the first drones came out portable enough to take on an outing? Remember the first time you got internet banking, the first realisation that you could make a payment direct, without dialling anything, writing anything, handing over anything? Likewise, remember the first articles on self-driving cars and augmented reality?

At what point did technology stop being fun?

Is anyone seriously as excited about the new Samsung Galaxy S9? Did anyone even notice? The has slightly better camera technology, than its predecessor and a version of Animoji. And you can choose between Midnight Black, Coral Blue and Lilac Purple. Woo-hoo. Likewise, are we really excited that Apple now has a touch bar?

We seem to have hit something of a dull patch, a weird hiatus. While, behind the scenes there are a range of improvements being made, what is actually visible is currently not gripping the imagination much. The past ten years have spoilt us. Exciting leaps in generally-available technology have stalled. There's a lot of talk about technology taking jobs, or breaking, but not much about how it can exponentially change our lives.

Economist James Bessen of Boston University pointed out some years ago in an article entitled "Where have the great inventors gone?" that it is difficult to identify modern-day equivalents of Watt, Edison and Salk. He suggests it's because today's technology is more complex and more collaborative.

He pointed out that whereas Thomas Edison appeared in no less than 4,709 New York Times articles in his lifetime, Steve Wozniak had at time of writing the article appeared in only 144. And that Wozniak had appeared far more than most modern technologists.

We need visible technology innovation leaders - those that can inspire us, as Jobs did in the early days of the iPad.

That's why Elon Musk is a good thing. Because he's the person with the big ideas, who fires up the imagination and makes it happen. He makes the first battery-run car that people actually want to drive. He says let's send people

from city to city on a train faster than a rocket. Let's create affordable space travel. Let's colonise Mars. Who wasn't excited when the Falcon Heavy lifted clear of its pad, with its radio set to play David Bowie on a loop? Musk himself has the enthusiasm, saying that the launch was the most exciting thing he'd ever seen.

Even Musk's "The Boring Company" is not boring at all. It is laying the groundwork for something which could change the face of large cities and improve millions of lives, eliminating commuter misery with very little impact on the environment. He's always ambitious. He doesn't want just a few big stations he wants, according to another recent tweet, "1000's [sic] of small stations that take you very close to your destination and blend seamlessly into the fabric of a city".

In order to create momentum, technology should always challenge the status quo. Behind the scenes AI and Blockchain are being adopted in all sorts of exciting ways that will significantly reduce fraud and increase efficiency and quality of life, healthcare and financial transparency. We are incrementally seeing the speed and efficiency with which we do everyday tasks improve and move forward. But we still need the visible visionaries. The ones like Musk.

And we need those that are going to challenge them. Uber's CEO Dara Khosrowshahi plans electric-powered, flying vehicles that could carry passengers autonomously between landing pads, cutting out the jams, another great example of an idea that could change the way we live in a significant, exciting way. Good on Khosrowshahi. And good for him for brushing off Musk's mocking. These battles benefit and engage us all.

Air taxis are arguably the next exciting, doable thing. They will access the real benefit of self-driving cars. We know we can use the air, because it's too congested on the ground, but clearly human beings flying cars would be an accident waiting to happen. The Uber air taxi idea would bring together technologies in a way that could improve everyone's lives.

So, come on people. Wake up. Bring on more ideas that fire the imagination and things that everyone can all get excited about.

Original article can be found here:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/why-elon-musk-wanting-a-micro-station-near-you-matters\\_uk\\_5aa6b252e4b0e37f40418a48](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/why-elon-musk-wanting-a-micro-station-near-you-matters_uk_5aa6b252e4b0e37f40418a48)