our Pacific Northwest neighbor, Microsoft, has taken advantage of the way your appliance works in order to serve up information, news, and data. Microsoft recently demonstrated that by being part of the "screen experience" by paying $425 million for WebTV and $1 billion for a stake in cable operator Comcast.

Your future Internet experience—whether at home or at your place of business—will not be rooted in the appliance, but in the value it adds to your work or social life. Business telecommunications is in the midst of a revolution as big in its own way as satellite television or the Internet. To the consumer, it looks like the"

But this urge to go digital isn’t without its pitfalls. Intense efforts and great spending by some of the best and brightest companies has yielded a business model in which the consumer will pay enough money to make sophisticated, costly technology a worthwhile business investment. Interactive television is a trial balloon showing the promise they once had, though other kinds of digital interactive technology is securing a market. Digital editing and digital transmission of images and sound are no longer revolutionary.

The fact that it is my own inclination to actually go to the movies with my wife, rather than as our children do, underscores the point that all consumers—and all businesses—don’t embrace change at the same speed. The “rush” to replace the analog technology of vacuum tubes with the digital technology has become more and more a commonplace.

But government deregulation also throws up new entries. As digital technology becomes more and more pervasive, it also will present more and more challenges relating to costs and development. The digital world will blur the lines between data and video on a computer screen and the entertainment and news we have grown accustomed to on our television sets.

SWITCHING CHANNELS

One clear benefit of the digital world will be greater choice. Individuals will be able to personalize the kinds of information they receive. Whether it be the medium they want to use. Hand-held digital telephones with news, messages, Internet connections, as well as the more mundane tasks of scheduling, telephoning, and electronic files will be packed into small cost-effective devices.

Companies such as Motorola, Ericsson, and Sony will lead the charge in this area, but an entire behind-the-scenes technology deployment will have taken place—unseen by the average customer. Digital standardization will provide more information to consumers as well as create challenges relating to costs and development. The digital world will blur the lines between data and video on a computer screen and the entertainment and news we have grown accustomed to on our television sets.

When you see a digital television picture on your computer screen, you’ll know it. The clarity and quality is downright amazing, and some digital broadcasting currently being received by digital set-top boxes looks almost 3D. Even with current standard televisions, signals transmitted digitally via a satellite make Thursday night’s Seinfeld episode shine even brighter.

The big question here has been, “Gee, is this all that much of a revolution and that keeps companies like Intel, Sony, and TimeWarner up at night? Is ‘How much will consumers pay for this technology?’

Severance decided to make this a particularly exciting shift for the industry. Not only are huge sums of money being spent on a variety of new delivery systems, but also on new ways to make the information choices. One channel might be news; another might be a conversation with co-workers or family members. Digital technology literally unleashes whole new combinations of images and sounds that can go anywhere and be transported for a fraction of their traditional cost. While the corporate landscape will be dominated by some of the same players competing today, it is fair to say that everyone is watchful of new entries. As digital technology becomes more widespread, we will present new opportunities for startup and new ventures.

Whether it is video browsers that let computer users watch full motion digital video with sound, digital signals sent via satellites, or new digital transmission towers, the consumer will be clamoring for the best technology at the best price. The challenge for the consumer electronics industry is to deliver it.

LETTER CARRIERS AGAIN SPONSOR FOOD DRIVE FOR NATION’S NEEDY

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA
OF WISCONSIN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 1998

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, again this year, as they have for countless years in the past, letter carriers from around the country will collect nonperishable food items placed near their customer’s mailboxes on Saturday, May 9. The food will then be delivered to local food pantries for distribution to those in need. Letter carriers in my hometown of Milwaukee, collected the largest amount of food nationwide in their efforts of May, 1997.

The National Association of Letter Carriers, in conjunction with the United States Postal Service and the United Way, will kick off this year’s food drive in Milwaukee with a press conference on Thursday, May 7, to raise community awareness of this very worthwhile project.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to ask my colleagues to enthusiastically support the letter carriers’ food drives in their hometowns and districts, and to remind my fellow residents of Milwaukee and Waukesha County to consider buying a few extra canned goods and nonperishables while doing the weekly grocery shopping the week before the 7th. Together, we can ensure that this year’s food drive is as successful as those which came before.

With a little help from all of us, our local food pantries will be stocked full and maybe even over-flowing, for this summer, a time when pantries are often put to the test.

CONGRATULATIONS TO GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL HONOREES

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 1998

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great enthusiasm that I congratulate Janet Haynes, Gail Thompson and the Matsushita Electric Corporation of America for their selection as honorees at this year’s Women of Distinction luncheon, sponsored by the Girl Scout Council of Greater Essex and Hudson Counties. This year’s luncheon will take place on April 23 at the Holiday Inn/North in Newark, NJ.

Janet Haynes, who will receive the Girl Scout World of People award, is a native of Jersey City. She serves as county clerk for the County of Hudson. Through her election to this post, she became the highest ranking African-American official in the history of Hudson County and the only African-American to serve as county clerk in the state of New Jersey.

A former girl scout, Miss Haynes continues to be actively involved in volunteer work. She has served as the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the board of directors of the Hudson County