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Episode 47 - "Is Magic Leap the Solyndra of 2017?"

Hosts: Phillip Jackson and Brian Lange

<http://www.futurecommerce.fm/episode-47-is-magic-leap-solyndra-2017>

Phillip: Welcome to Future Commerce, the podcast about cutting-edge and next-generation commerce, rated as one of Forbes' "top six podcasts worth your time." I'm Phillip.

Brian: And I'm Brian.

Phillip: And we have to get that little self-promo stuff in there now, we're getting good about this stuff. We want you to give us feedback about today's show, so please leave that in the Disqus comment box on our site at futurecommerce.fm. You can also listen at any time at Apple Podcasts, as we like to call it nowadays, and Google Play, or listen right from your Amazon Echo on TuneIn Radio with the phrase, "Alexa, play Future Commerce podcast."

Brian: Also, don't forget to sign up for FC Insiders, which is our weekly newsletter about what's new and what's next in retail.

Phillip: And I'm stoked, because it's a thing that's actually happening now and people are excited about it.

Brian: Yeah. It looks really beautiful and it's got great information. I highly recommend it. And it's just gonna get better as we go.

Phillip: And what we're really excited about is the sort of exclusive content that'll come to you free of charge. You know, a lot of podcasts are trying to monetize these days with, like, Patreon or some other means, and we're not saying we'll never do that - don't hold us to it - but-

Brian: For now.

Phillip: Yeah, for now, the way that we want to get exclusive content and unedited interviews and our hot takes on certain topics outside of our social channel is in that email newsletter. So, please check it out at futurecommerce.fm. And holy cow, this week has been insane.

Brian: There's a lot happening.

Phillip: So, it's like, ever since Donald Trump took office, with the news cycle just being insane, I feel like all of like everything, all the news cycles, even retail technology, even security, retail security. All the things that, it used to be like every quarter you'd have something really big happen. I feel like we're getting really big happening all the time now. So, it's crazy. We've got a lot to talk about today, so buckle up.

Brian: Yes. Let's start with Google Home. Because it was just announced that Target will now be selling through Google Home, which means that Google Home now has two major retailers it's partnering with.

Phillip: What was the other one? What's the other one?

Brian: Oh, you know, just Walmart.

Phillip: Yeah, I have never heard of them. At some point it's like, if you have Walmart and you have Target, is it game over?

Brian: Well, no, because there's Amazon.

Phillip: Well, is Amazon bigger than Walmart and Target combined?

Brian: Kind of.

Phillip: I mean from like a net value, maybe. But they do a lot more than just sales. I wonder if their marketplace channel is truly bigger than Walmart and Target combined. Walmart is the number one grocery retailer in the United States. Think about that. Right?

Brian: Yup.

Phillip: So, I don't know. This feels ... For me, the real story here is how do you blow a two-year lead? How do you blow it like that? Like, how do you do it? This is the miracle at the meadowlands, but in voice first.

Brian: Is it really a two-year lead blown? I mean, yes, Google Home is catching up. I think it's safe to say that Google had a lot of the things necessary to do this kind of already in the wings. Like, it wasn't that hard for them to take their AI assistant and throw it onto a device that could listen, right?

Phillip: Yeah, but they're making headway in the partnerships. Everybody wants to fight Amazon.

Brian: Well, Amazon doesn't need to partner with people. I mean, they've got their own empire. They don't need to go partner with Target.

Phillip: Even from like a technology cycle perspective, Google Home has for six months had the multiple house member voice recognition personalization, guess what? That was just announced. Just announced, like, within the last three days by Amazon. I just don't even care.

Brian: That's true, but they've been investing in other ways, though.

Phillip: Yeah.

Brian: It's like, they've been investing in different types of hardware, and now, how many ...? I don't even want to get into how many devices there are.

Phillip: That's the other problem.

Brian: There is an infinite amount of devices now, at least in terms of my mind and what I can buy from them. There's a device for everything. There's like a little alarm clock-looking device now, crazy.

Phillip: Oh my gosh. It's kitsch, but it's cool, because it does the thing that ... Not to talk about FC Insiders again ... Actually, you know what? I don't need to talk about FC Insiders again. Dropbox! So, Dropbox announced a rebrand that everybody's hating and vomiting over right now. And Dropbox is purposely kind of shoving its logo, or its redesigned logo, on a bunch of ugly sort of '80s neon backgrounds right now. And the stated purpose is that they want Dropbox to be seen as more of a malleable brand, in that the brand logo icon of Dropbox can fit into every part of your life, whether it's work or home or play or music or whatever. And I feel like that's kind of how the Alexa brand

is trying to be presented to consumers, in that it's a camera, it's a TV thing in your kitchen, it's also a speaker but it could be an alarm clock. Like, at some point, is it a blender, too? Like at what point do we- ?

Brian: It's definitely a fridge.

Phillip: Yeah, definitely a fridge. So here's my ... I do think that it's important to be perceived as the technology leader, and you need to lead the news cycle before somebody says, "Oh, Alexa's just copying everything Google Home does at this point." Google Home was doing multi-room audio. It took them ... They acquired Sonos like forever ago, and it took them forever and a day to integrate some sort of solution for multi-room audio, multi-room sound-

Brian: But think about this though, from a consumer perspective, like a general public perspective, who has more visibility right now, Google Home or the Echo series?

Phillip: I truly don't know.

Brian: Definitely the Echo series.

Phillip: I don't think I can objectively answer that. I walked into Costco today. Do you know what they have in the first seven foot of walking into my Costco, my local Costco?

Brian: What's that?

Phillip: A buy two ... a BOGO on Google Home devices. A BOGO.

Brian: That's a win.

Phillip: And I looked around for an Echo, and I know that they have to be there, but I couldn't find them.

Brian: No, they're probably not there, actually. I don't think they're there.

Phillip: I don't know, man. I feel like when grandma and grandpa are going to Costco and they buy their golf shirts and chicken wings and a bottle of Pinot, and they pick up a Google Home on the way out the door, yeah. That smart speaker's is gonna win the game, because they're owning ... It's like a multi-generational approach to owning the home automation ... I don't know.

Brian: Imagine if Costco ended up on Google Home as well.

Phillip: Dude, I'm telling you. This is a trial balloon. They're just putting that little cardboard thing in the front of the-

Brian: Okay, again, Amazon still has the most dominant e-purchasing empire, if you will. Like, whatever electronic form of commerce there is, they're the standard. So, you can tell me all day long that Google Home is catching up, but I think Amazon ... Like, they don't have to connect to Costco because they are Costco. They don't have to connect to Walmart, 'cause they are Walmart.

Phillip: I wouldn't have said ... I would recharacterize it. I don't think that Google Home is catching up. I think Google Home is leading the first past the pole on every single milestone, from contextually knowing who it is in your home that's speaking to the speaker, to major, major retail partnerships. Like, they're capturing the news cycle and I'm a little bit bummed out about it, because I think objectively, I do think that the Amazon devices are better. But it's hard to justify right now, because the news is being totally owned by Google Home doing all these things first.

Brian: Right, because ... And actually, that's a really good point, because they can announce a partnership. Whereas Amazon, they don't need to announce a partnership. Google Home is going to inevitably dominate the news with all these partnerships because it needs them.

Phillip: I would say that's more advantageous for them from a consumer perspective. Who is the one to go to if I want to shop at Walmart and Target, which I do. I just don't see Walmart and Target ... There's probably some sort of an agreement there that there's an exclusive on the Google Home devices for some period of time, too.

Brian: It doesn't feel like it. I mean, Walmart ... You would've thought Walmart would have one, but they only partnered with Walmart a few months back, and now they're partnering with Target, which is like Walmart's biggest competitor.

Phillip: Alright, well, there's so much more to talk about. I just think that I'm getting bummed because I feel like the last 12 episodes or 20 episodes, we just keep talking about how Amazon keeps blowing this lead, and just 'cause you're first to the market and you create a new market segment doesn't always mean that - Like, I guess Digital River and Rio would say that about iPod. Like, somebody can come along and do it better and it'll be won on partnerships, and I'm kind of nervous. And you know what it is? It's 'cause I own so many Echo devices. I don't want to buy a Google Home.

Brian: This is just fear talking right now.

Phillip: Yeah, this is my own fear. Alright, move on, move on. Speaking of Amazon ...

Brian: Wait, wait, wait. One more note on Google Home. Did you see that their new, the smaller device, it had a glitch where it actually was always recording?

Phillip: Oh yeah, that's true. That wasn't in our doc. That is a big problem. In a month where there's security issue after security issue after security issue, the last thing anyone wants is also privacy problems. Which is the thing that everybody's been worried about with these stupid speakers anyway.

Brian: True. True. Does your Echo ever glitch out on you? Where, like, Alexa will just say something randomly?

Phillip: Yeah, randomly, yeah. That happens. Sure.

Brian: Yeah, that does happen.

Phillip: Google's not above it, though, 'cause Google does the same thing. My OK Google get's triggered every now and then, like it just got triggered right now, whoops. That happens from time to time, too. I would also say that my ... and it's usually with the TV in the background, like, it'll mishear something. But Google has its own share of problems. Google Fi this past week pushed a push notification out to like half a million Google Fi subscribers saying, "You're data has been limited due to excessive usage," which signaled a bunch of things to Fi subscribers. One, the rollback of the "we'll never throttle you" promise. That means that somebody somewhere is working on a notification system to say that you're using too much data. And two, that maybe that's gonna be in place because there's an unlimited plan probably around the corner. So that's an interesting thing, too. But Google's not above having missteps, that's for sure.

Brian: Geez. If Google Fi really released an unlimited plan, I would probably switch back.

Phillip: I mean, if you're gonna go with an MVNO right now, and you're looking for an unlimited plan ... I mean, as much as I gag and want to throw up when I say it, Xfinity actually has a \$50 unlimited MVNO. So, that's not so bad. And actually they have the phone financing and all that good stuff, too. Anyway. So, Amazon.

Brian: Back to Amazon, because this is probably the most exciting thing we're gonna talk about all day.

Phillip: I mean, for you. I've been super, like, not passionate about this, but I'm apparently the only one, 'cause our listeners seem to freakin' love these episodes. But, yes ...

Brian: And on top of that, we kind of called it.

Phillip: You called it. I have nothing to do with this. This was all you.

Brian: So, Body Labs was just acquired by Amazon for, what was it, 70 million?

Phillip: 70 ... 70 million, yeah. Body Labs, who we've had on the show.

Brian: Yes. Super excited about that. I've been feeling that that was going to happen, so it definitely was really exciting to me to see Amazon sort of agree that this is something that they want to invest in.

Phillip: What was the value prop for Body Labs, for those who don't remember, haven't listened to the show yet?

Brian: Oh, good point. So, Body Labs is a body modeling software that can actually take your 2D picture of your body and turn it into a 3D representation of your body, down to very high levels of accuracy. And they had some different solutions out there for retailers to be able to use their software to capture body data on their customers. And I think Amazon is going to do a lot with this. They've already released the Look device, which means that they're already starting to get data on what people wear and how they wear it and what they end up wearing. And so, ultimately, I see the Look device as being a way for Amazon to now take the technology that Body Labs is adding to their collection of tools, and be able to help people preview clothes on themselves, or do a lot of other stuff. They could use this for their private label brands, and use the data to do custom clothing, or make clothing that fits people better, or build sizes around body shape and style.

Phillip: Yeah, I mean this goes right with the Amazon Look, right?

Brian: Exactly, yeah.

Phillip: Yeah. What was really interesting that I'm kind of a little bit bummed about, 'cause it's sort of obvious, and I don't know that it's gonna continue to go that way, but it's kind of obvious to me that Amazon's gonna use this for its emerging clothing and fashion play, and probably in its integrating body data into its Look and Alexa products and stuff. But, Mosh, which was Body Labs sort of funds Snapchat-ish, you know, see what you look like if you have tentacle arms kind of proof-of-concept app, was actually kind of cool and fun.

Brian: It was, yeah.

Phillip: And I'm really bummed to see that go away, and I wonder if that particular type of technology, if we're gonna see a social network or an image network or something to that effect. Maybe a partnership with Snap. I mean, maybe they should just acquire Snap. I'm saying that out loud in case it happens so that I can say I was right. Gosh, I'm thinking to myself, it would really be the stock right now, too. But I'm just thinking to myself, that was kind of cool, and I would hate to see that go away.

Brian: That's a really good point. And actually, we talked about this with Body Labs. Their technology can be applied to way more than just fashion. I mean, it can be applied to

anything related to the body. So, I think Amazon may get into game development more, or they may allow their game developers or partners to use this to introduce the idea of a personal avatar for games, and we talked about this at length in episode eight, and with the episode with Body Labs. But, yeah, there's a ton of other ... Custom furniture, custom golf clubs, custom anything that's related to your body could be done with this.

Phillip: That's the problem is that when anything could be done, it's hard to imagine what could be done.

Brian: Well, I think they've got some good use cases up front. Really tangible use cases up front, which is worth the purchase alone, let alone the future of body data and what can be done with it. It's just really cool to see, you know, we've been talking about this for so long, it's really cool to see Amazon ... Maybe they were listening to the podcast and decided to make the purchase.

Phillip: I'm 100% sure that's what happened.

Brian: Exactly. Bezos was like, "That Brian and Phillip, they know what they're talking about."

Phillip: Yeah. "You remember that time that Brian predicted the Whole Foods acquisition? We should listen to those guys more often, let's see what else they're saying." Hey, this is totally crazy and totally off base, I would like to point out that in the last episode, you chastised me for talking about frickin' rockets, 'kay?

Brian: Did I? Oh, I did! Yeah, I did, you're right.

Phillip: You did. You said, "This has nothing to do with anything." Okay. Here it comes.

Brian: This is amazing.

Phillip: So, I got two surveys this week. The first survey was from the National Retail Federation ... Foundation? Federation. Where NRF asked me what I thought about shop.org and I had to answer it in a way that wouldn't cause me not to be invited back on a press pass again, and then-

Brian: Speaking of NRF, before you go to your next point, really quick aside. We had a really fun conversation with their head of content. And that conversation that we had with him was almost its own episode.

Phillip: It really was. Actually, I will say this, if they would just put that ... Is it Eric? Eric Olson. He's the vice president of education strategies at NRF. If they had put Eric on a stage somewhere, he knows what's up. Eric knows what's up.

Brian: That would've been a great session. That's a good point.

Phillip: The three of us, actually. I wish we had just pressed record on that conversation. It was really great. It actually gives me a lot of confidence that NRF actually knows what they're doing. Not that I didn't think that before, but the experience of being at a show, a tradeshow like that, and then actually speaking to what the people ... Hearing people cast vision for the show and what they want it to be versus what it actually comes out to be sometimes, I think, is a very different thing, and these cats really know what's up. Okay. So, that was the first one. That was the first survey I got. The second survey that I got this week was from Uber. It says, "We've got a 10-minute survey for you, we'd love for you to check it out." And so I was like, "Really? Do I really want to answer a survey that's likely about have I ever been sexually harassed inside of an Uber?" And I was like, "Do I really want to deal with this?" Which is, whatever. All jokes aside. But I'm really glad that I clicked into it, because Uber ... the first question was, "Which of these technologies have you ever heard of?" And I had heard of all of them, there was

self-driving cars and solar in roadways and some other things. One of them was the electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, eVTOL. And I was like, "Yeah, I've heard of that." I think we might've talked about it a year ago on the show or something to that effect. Actually, it wasn't that long ago, back in April they put out a PR on PR newswire, there was a press release about the Uber Elevate Network. So, basically like, drones that can carry people that will be Ubering around the world, and we're like, "Yeah. That's a bunch of BS." Well, this survey, which was no less than like a hundred questions, was almost entirely about how do you envision yourself using eVTOL? What would make you feel safest? Having bomb-sniffing K-9 dogs, or having metal detectors, or does there have to be a pilot? Can it be autonomous? I'm like, "Hell yeah, there has to be a pilot." Would you feel safe if you knew that there was a parachute on board? Oh my gosh.

Brian: I would just imagine a world where everyone's getting picked up by these drones. And then they run out of power or there's a failure, they just have these people parachuting down.

Phillip: Then you call into work, "I'm running a little late, my eVTOL crashed. Sorry." Show title. Then we had this ... There was a bunch of other questions, like, "Do you envision it being more like a bus transfer station, where you wait for your eVTOL, like mass transit? Or as a high-end experience that you're willing to pay a little more for, the similar amount of travel, just save a few minutes? Would the experience feel more like a first class lounge at an airport?" It was really interesting. Like, "Do you expect food to be free? Do expect to be able to purchase refreshments? Do you expect to be able to have access to your bag during flight?" Really interesting to see what they're polling for. I don't know how in the world I qualified for this survey, but I super want to try this.

Brian: With the parachute, especially.

Phillip: So, Uber, if you're listening, Kalanick, if you have anything to do with Uber anymore, then put me in one of those freakin' things. I will pilot it. Pilot in the sense of I'll be first. I don't want to take control of the vehicle.

Brian: That would be the worst, if everyone was just out there flying around their own little drones everywhere.

Phillip: Oh my word. It was certainly ... Like, I'm thrilled just talking about having received the survey, taking the survey was an experience itself. I was very excited about that.

Brian: Well, hurry up, future. Get here.

Phillip: I'm gonna call it right now, 20 years from now there will be no eVTOLs. I'm just saying.

Brian: You don't think it's gonna be here in 20 years?

Phillip: I feel like we are at an inflection point where we will either all have eVTOLs and that's our primary mode of transportation, or we're all looking for scrap metal so that we can fortify our homes and shelters from the zombies and the coming nuclear apocalypse that we're all on the brink of.

Brian: That's your vision of the future?

Phillip: There's only two paths. There's only two options that we have.

Brian: Oh my gosh. Speaking of the future ...

Phillip: If the future is 2011, yes.

Brian: Facebook announced their own food delivery service.

Phillip: You know, it's funny, because we said, when we were talking with Eric from NRF yesterday, we said unironically that food delivery is a disruptive technology, and now we're laughing at one of the largest companies in the world getting into it. So, I find it funny. I think it's just not on brand for them.

Brian: Yeah, I think that's the part that's weird. It's like, why is Facebook going in ... Like, of all the things that they could go invest in, this is not the thing that I expected them to go and announce.

Phillip: I don't know.

Brian: It's just kind of comical. I don't know. Yeah.

Phillip: I have this vision of me sitting with the brand new Facebook Oculus \$199 VR headset on at home, and then getting a notification on the headset that my food's about to arrive. Then getting a notification that Brian 'liked' that my food was about to arrive on Facebook. Then I get the food from the door-

Brian: And you're like taking pictures of it.

Phillip: Yeah. Facebook Messenger pops up and it's like, "Rate your delivery driver." And then ... I can see how this plays into the entire ecosystem. I really can. What would be really funny is if, moments before ordering the food, I post, "Bachelor for the weekend, wife and kids are away! Gonna be awesome!" And it posts a status for me, "Phillip ordered three cheese pizzas from Sal's Italian Ristorante."

Brian: Oh man. Yeah. This is the future.

Phillip: It's not a very bright future. Actually, I kind of love more ... Like, we had a food delivery service out here. I live out west, west of West Palm Beach, and it's in the suburbs, definitely in the suburbs, but we don't have a lot of food delivery out here. And I wish we had like ... What's the big one? Seamless or Grubhub or whatever. Yeah, I wish we had one of those. I don't have a lot of confidence that Facebook is gonna be thing that disrupts that. UberEATS I think could work here, and we do have Uber out here and people use Uber all the time out here, but for whatever reason, UberEATS is not even piloted in my area yet.

Brian: Oh wow. I think it's in my town. I'm kind of in a suburb of Seattle, too, but it's kind of on the edge. I think we have it. I haven't tried it.

Phillip: Anyway, whatever. Food is food.

Brian: Speaking of Facebook, though, they do have some interesting news, right?

Phillip: Yes.

Brian: So, Facebook Oculus, \$199 standalone set.

Phillip: The Oculus Go is what it's called.

Brian: Very exciting to me. Very exciting. All of the high-end producers of VR sets have been really unapproachable. Unless you're a VR nerd, and I love all the VR nerds out there, but unless you're one, you probably don't own Oculus or HTC VIVE or one of those other high-end sets. So, this will hopefully be sort of a high VR experience or near-high VR experience with a lower price tag.

Phillip: I love that near-high VR experience. Near-high VR, it's like it's not high VR, it's near it. It's like saying, "It's not diarrhea, it's near diarrhea." It doesn't sound good to me. I don't know. Anyway, it is definitely not \$500, and it doesn't require another device, right? It's self-contained.

Brian: That's the part that's the coolest. I think it's just buy and go. They named it Go, right? Like, buy one and get rolling on VR right away.

Phillip: I don't even need to plug my phone into it.

Brian: Yeah, which is great. I'm tired of phone VR. Like, that's been around for several years now. Google Cardboard has been around for several years.

Phillip: Yeah it has. Never actually did anything of any worth.

Brian: No, and same with Samsung VR. No one wants to take their phone and put it into a case that probably doesn't fit it very well, and then put on glasses and have this weird, like, a pseudo-experience where it feels like you're hacking your phone to get VR.

Phillip: That's true.

Brian: That's just not been people's desire. And I've used a couple of them that I really enjoyed, I actually thought it was pretty good. But it doesn't seem like it's own thing. So, I feel like this is the real first step in getting VR out to the public in a much more accessible way.

Phillip: Yeah, and it's not just VR in the visual sense, but it also has spatial ... what's it called? There's an audio thing that goes along with it. It's self-contained, the whole thing's self-contained.

Brian: Yeah, just put it on and jump in.

Phillip: Spatial audio.

Brian: Spatial audio, exactly. The Oculus has, I think ... It's widely said that Oculus has the better set of apps than Gear or any of the other ones. It's exciting to me, because I've actually never tried Oculus specifically, and I think I might actually go purchase this.

Phillip: Somebody needs to give us both an Oculus demo. That's what needs to happen.

Brian: That's a good point, we do need an Oculus demo.

Phillip: Hugo Barra, if you're listening to us right now, then we will fly to you, and give us an Oculus Go demo, that'd be awesome.

Brian: Yeah, or Zuckerberg, if he's listening.

Phillip: I mean, Zuck, listen. Call me, baby. Call me. Do you know what I feel like this is, though? And I hate to do this. So, I'm on The Verge right now, reading the article about Oculus Go, and under the recommended tab, which is one of those, like, Outbrain content syndication sort of a thing, sponsored areas, it's like, "Explore the new Lincoln Navigator." And it has this concept of a Lincoln Navigator with a gull-wing door. And I'm just thinking to myself, this is exactly right, because VR is kitsch. And I'm not trying to be that guy. I'm not gonna hate on it, because I do think that this is interesting in sort of it's a brand new world, but it's still viewed as ... There's a reason that that particular article is being promoted here, because it is the gull-wing door Lincoln Navigator of user interface experience, user experience right now.

Brian: No, that's a good point.

Phillip: You know what I mean? We gotta get past that, and I think this helps. Price point's gonna help in a big way, but we still need a mass consumer adoption moment that there's some sort of application that betters people's lives and makes it feel like they can't live without it. I don't know.

Brian: Yeah, no. Totally right. And that's why I think AR is gonna continue to stay ahead of it, because the use case for AR is just really obvious. And, well, this leads us to another topic, which is Magic Leap just took a Series D-

Phillip: Series D. And not a small Series D. This is a one-billion-dollar Series D, is what they're looking to get.

Brian: This is a lot of money for a product that doesn't exist. Or at least no one knows what it is.

Phillip: Okay, I'm gonna call it right now. Okay, you ready?

Brian: Yeah.

Phillip: And I might make this the episode title so we can freaking find the episode where I said it, okay?

Brian: Alright, do it.

Phillip: Magic Leap is the Solyndra of 2017 tech. Solyndra was a solar Silicon Valley startup that swindled the U.S. government for over \$500 million back in Obama era. And I am calling it right now. We haven't seen a single real thing from Magic Leap. I'm okay to be wrong. I will be wrong.

Brian: So, I'm gonna take the complete contrary position.

Phillip: Okay.

Brian: Alright? And I'm gonna say that Magic Leap is the next step in tech that we've all been waiting for.

Phillip: It's just, it keeps getting winnowed down. Like, every time that we talked about Magic Leap in the last year, it's narrower and narrower. It used to be that it was gonna be laser projection on your freaking retina, and now it's the AR device augmented reality glass company. It feels like they are exceptional at fundraising and nothing else. That's my opinion. They're in search of a technology and a platform for the technology that will actually be able to have some sort of application, and that never bodes well for a tech company.

Brian: You might be right. You might be right.

Phillip: I don't know. Series D, man. Billion dollars. You can't make something happen ... I mean something. Even Snap came out with glasses.

Brian: You gotta have a heck of a demo for \$1 billion.

Phillip: They must have a heck of a demo. You know, there was this whole thing about using VR with psychoactive drugs of some kind, I forget, there's a specific name for it. But you know, having a totally immersive experience doesn't require haptics, because we're tricking the brain into seeing and feeling things, and smells and all sorts of things because you're using drugs at the same time. If Magic Leap gives that kind of a demo, with psychoactives, to the CEOs in Silicon Valley that are ... We're gonna find out, I'm pretty sure, that it's ... Did you ever see Jessica Jones?

Brian: Yeah.

Phillip: Yeah, so, I swear to God, Kilgrave is the CEO of Magic Leap. That's he's just out there, talking people into this, and nobody knows any idea why they're pumping money into this company. Anyway, that's my rant. I have to be grumpy at some point today, so there it is.

Brian: Yeah. That was pretty grumpy. I like it. I think this is gonna be good, because you and I have opposite positions on this, so one of us is gonna be right.

Phillip: Yeah, someone's gonna be right. Future Commerce called it! Oh, hey, this is something that kind of rocked me the other day, which I'm not super into ... I follow a bunch of city planners, urbanist-type people. I don't know if you follow anyone like that on Twitter, it's kind of fun. There's one person in particular that actually got me into this space, who's a local here in West Palm Beach, who's been advocating with the city for some time. He runs a Twitter called WalkableWPB, Walkable West Palm Beach, and I forget the guy's name. I'm so bad about that. If somebody out there knows who he is, let me know. I forget. But he's also affiliated with strongtowns.org ... doesn't matter. He put something out on Twitter which I thought was really impressive. The mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, Enrique Peñalosa, actually had this phenomenal quote about ... he said, "A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars, it's where the rich ride public transportation." And I thought that that was transformative in the way that I think about how we're ... I know we were joking about eVTOL a little bit ago, but I really believe that real disruption in public transit, real disruption in that way is gonna come where the convenience outweighs any other factor. And it's so convenient and so cheap for you, in every means of convenience, to use public and mass transit to get around cities. So, I just find that we're at this weird place where most cities, most people don't travel around that way, and the places, the urban centers where we have such high innovation are the places that are innovating in public transit as well. Anyway. It's a thought. I don't have anything else to say other than that. Just an interesting thought.

Brian: Great thought. I think worth considering as America continues to develop itself, it's a good thing to consider. Speaking of developing countries-

Phillip: Oh, sorry. Before you segue, sorry. One other thing. We are in a public health crisis. And I laugh about it because I am somebody who's been affected in that way, in that at 37 years old, I'm finally getting active for the first time in my life. And so, I know we're making some jokes about food delivery and body data in particular, but the inner section of all these technologies is better lives for human beings. And if we had better food to eat, where we make better choices, and there's a cost associated with it, where we're always available to make a better choice for ourselves, and then we also had the ability to be more active ... And you know, cities that have revolutionized their public transit systems have more active populouses.

Brian: Yes. Really good point.

Phillip: And you know, we wouldn't have a public health crisis, and then we wouldn't have potentially even a health insurance crisis in this country. I think it all might come down to ... The whole world depends on disrupting food delivery and innovation in public transit. Boom.

Brian: Well, that's quite a statement. Also, I'm really excited about gamification of health, and I think body data's gonna play a role in that. We talked about that in episode eight as well.

Phillip: And just a shout-out, too, because we forget about him from time to time, but Jason L. Baptiste. He started this new company called Studio Live. It's basically like gamification of, well, I don't know how to explain it. So, he's created basically like a

cryptocurrency called FitCoin, where it's like Nike points or whatever they called them, but you earn them and they're able to be redeemed for certain things. Some of them, at least in the first run on studio.live, the first iteration of that is ... It's more like digital swag, ephemeral swag, you can get new avatars or stickers or something to that effect. But yeah, it's gamification, but you know, with a cryptocurrency sort of cross section. It's interesting. And so, we do know people that are doing this, and it's really exciting. Yeah, anyway.

Brian: It is, I agree, it's awesome. A good shout-out to Jason. We should get him back on the show sometime soon.

Phillip: Yeah, I'd love to hear about his new thing. Sorry, you were saying.

Brian: Oh, yeah, I was gonna talk about Project Loon, and how that got deployed in Puerto Rico.

Phillip: Yes! Yeah, I forgot about this. Dude, you can actually - Go ahead, go ahead, talk about it. What is Project Loon, for those who don't remember?

Brian: So, it provides cell reception via hot air balloon, which is just mind-blowing. And so, they're deploying it in Puerto Rico right now, to help make sure that communication stays up and people can stay connected. I'm just really happy that Google is using it in this way, and actually getting out there and deploying some of the stuff back from their Project X days, or whatever it was called. Was is Project X, is that what it was called?

Phillip: It was called Project X and then it was spun out as just, I think, X.

Brian: Was it Project 10 or Project X?

Phillip: This isn't Apple, it's Google. But you're right. What was really kind of amazing to see, and I'm trying to pull it up now so we can reference it in the show notes. Gosh, I should've had this cued up. But you can actually see Project Loon aircraft on [flightradar24.com](http://flightradar24.com), you can actually see them in Puerto Rico up in the air and doing their thing. It's kind of inspiring. And we said this in the last episode, but Puerto Rico being a proving ground, I don't want to get too excited about it, because it sounds like the government is doing everything they can to try to prevent from helping rebuild Puerto Rico at the moment, but that's another story and your viewpoint of that probably depends on your politics. But just to see that we're gonna use Puerto Rico as our ability to test and pilot things like this. So, if you got to [flightradar24](http://flightradar24.com), you can actually search by Project Loon, and you'll see Project Loon balloons literally over, not just Puerto Rico, but over top of Saint Martin, over top of the British and U.S. Virgin Islands. It's inspiring, because this is what this tech was supposed to be, this is what it was created for.

Brian: Yeah, and this seems way more useful to me than what Facebook did, which was livestream a video of him taking a virtual reality tour of Puerto Rico to promote the new Facebook feature. Which was just insane to me, that-

Phillip: Was that cringy?

Brian: That was beyond cringy. It was insulting.

Phillip: Yeah, that's kind of messed up.

Brian: Yeah, I was hoping that Facebook would get involved in a much more productive way than that. But yeah, I think what Google did was awesome, and I hope they continue to employ the stuff that they're doing in that way.

Phillip: Oh gosh, it's really cool. Facebook actually had a similar program that they at least put a trial balloon up for sometime ago that was drone-based, right?

Brian: I don't think I heard about that, that's cool.

Phillip: Yeah, Facebook had this whole promo where they had wi-fi drones, it was like a ... Facebook drone wi-fi. Okay, sorry, I have to search.

Brian: Were they like corded? Like, how did they keep their charge?

Phillip: So they were solar drones that-

Brian: Oh, solar drones, okay.

Phillip: So, the first was, I believe, called Aquila, I believe so. And they actually did this really interesting pilot, where, yes, it's basically wi-fi repeater in the same way that Project Loon is. And it's solar powered, and in theory, they would never ever have to land.

Brian: Wow, that's cool.

Phillip: Yeah, the Aquila Project, I think is what it was called, which was kind of interesting.

Brian: Oh, maybe I did see that.

Phillip: I think we mentioned it at some point, I can't remember.

Brian: Yeah, we might have.

Phillip: Anyway, very cool. I feel like I'm now so over-hyped, we have to come down a little bit.

Brian: We might be a little hyped.

Phillip: I don't have anything else. Oh, one last thing, which again, may or may not qualify as news in anyway whatsoever. But GitHub, which is the programming tool for source control, if you're kind of in that world, and a very popular Silicon Valley startup for enabling developers. Those cats, quite literally, that's their mascot, just kind of gave a little nod in their big annual conference to Voice UX as a potential emerging technology, not just for retail, but also assistive in terms of being a programming tool and a tool for developers. And that's the first time I think I've seen someone unironically use Voice UX in regards to programming. It's something that I think we talked a lot about when we first started the show, and the kinds of-

Brian: It's a big deal.

Phillip: ... techniques that need to be used to design user experiences in voice.

Brian: Yes. Yeah, I think it's a big deal, because GitHub is where the majority of productive development is done.

Phillip: It's like social coding right now, right?

Brian: Yeah, exactly. So, I think that he's nodding to Voice UX, that's a big step, and I think that the entire development community is gonna take note of this.

Phillip: Yeah, and I think that's what's going to help drive voice adoption. I think one thing that we're sort of missing, and I had done this some time ago, which is programming IoT buttons to have context. So, if I have an IoT button, like a real button in the real world - and I did this with the Amazon Dash developer kit button - but I'm on

one page in a website, let's say it was Magento, because that's exactly what it was, and I'm on one page in the back in Magento, and I press a button and it does one thing, and I press it on another page and it has another function. So, the function is based on my context. And I think that voice could work very similarly, and the fact that every developer, by and large, especially those who are using GitHub, probably use Macs more often than not. They probably have access to Siri now, more often than not. So, it's an interesting ... There's probably a way for us to see a future where we're using voice in a way that would be transformative.

Brian: Yeah, I mean, even more transformative than it already is.

Phillip: Right. I'm also thinking, like, I wonder ... There have to be non-sited people who already are developers and they're doing interesting work and I would love to see them have additional interfaces for interaction. And if we could help them be more productive with voice UI and UX, then I mean, how much more awesome would that be?

Brian: That would be awesome. Yeah, that's a really good point. Man, we ended this show on a series of really positive notes, that was awesome.

Phillip: Yeah, I don't know how we did it, we're usually not that good.

Brian: Especially since at one point in the show, your vision of the future was pretty insane.

Phillip: Yeah, pretty bleak, to be honest with you.

Brian: Good way to end it. Great talking as usual. Thanks for listening to Future Commerce. We want you to give us feedback about today's show, so please leave us some feedback in the Disqus comment box below. If you're subscribed on iTunes, please leave us a five-star review. Gotta love those. You can also subscribe to listen to Future Commerce on iTunes or Google Play, or listen right from your Amazon Echo with the phrase, "Alexa, play Future Commerce podcast." And do not forget to sign up for FC Insiders, you will not be disappointed.

Phillip: Yeah, you won't, promise you. And until next week ...

Brian: Keep looking towards the future.

Phillip: Yeah, we're in sync today. I like it.

Brian: We are.

Phillip: Alright, peace out. Bye.

Brian: Bye.