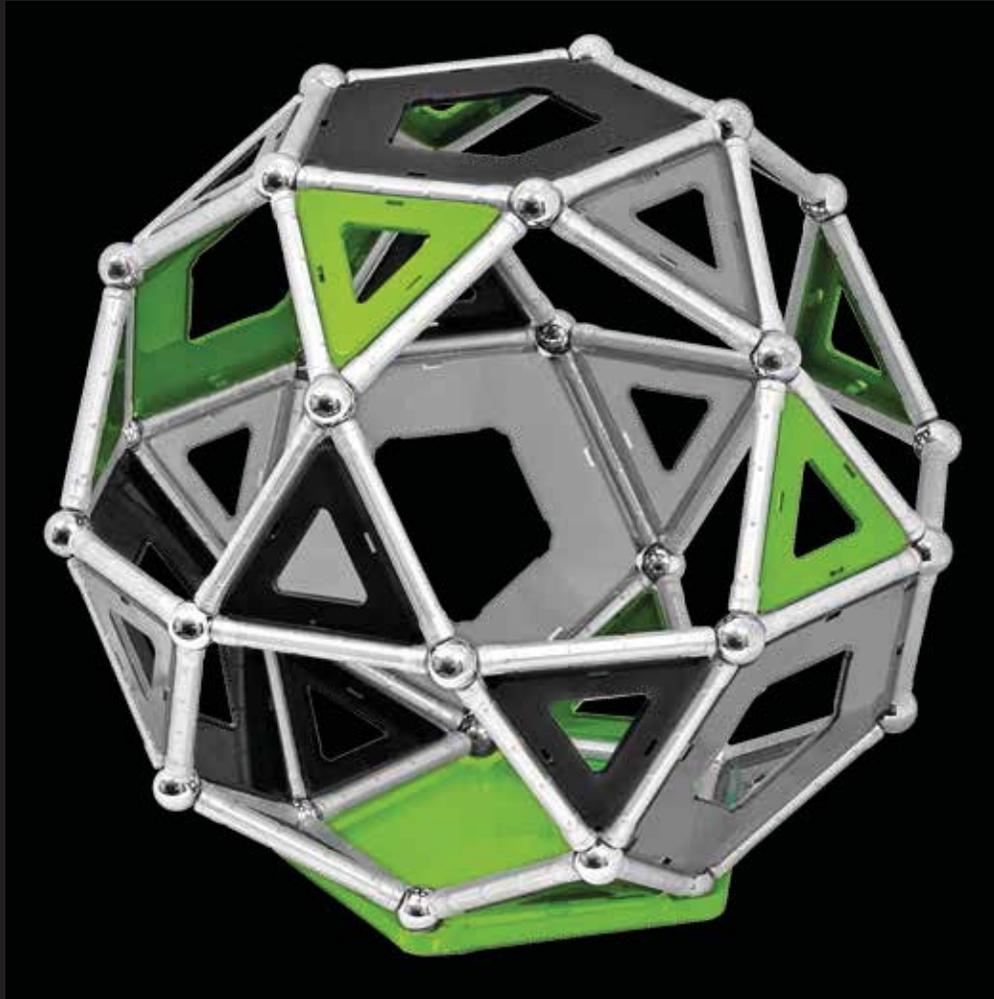


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# Specialist

## Think piece

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#### « LE CREUX ENTRE DEUX VAGUES »

The Fast 500 companies of 2016 matter more than ever. The tech industry is based upon growth - and in 2016 and the next few years - growth will be harder than ever to achieve. We will therefore rely on the Fast 500, or “the superstars of tomorrow” to provide that growth, just when it is needed. As an industry, technology surfs upon a wave of platform devices that sell in the hundreds of millions of units to consumers and enterprises. The most recent wave was composed of laptops and desktops, flat-screen TVs, gaming consoles, smartphones and tablets.

Combined, these five categories represent nearly 2 billion devices and almost a trillion dollars in sales in 2016: that’s a big wave! But sales of TV sets are flat, despite the introduction of 4K technology. Sales of game consoles are basically flat. Sales of PCs were down 4% in the last year, sales of tablets were down 15% , and although smartphone units did grow by 1% compared to 2015, lower average selling price means that the dollar value of smartphone sales is actually declining.

Our trillion dollar wave isn’t growing fast; in fact, it isn’t even growing at all, and will likely decline.

Meanwhile, there are new technologies that could be “next big things.” Gartner has identified the stages that emerging technologies go through as part of what they call the “Hype



Cycle." The Innovation Trigger is followed by a Peak of Inflated Expectations, a plunge into the Trough of Disillusionment (which, if I recall correctly, was also the name of a restaurant I once ate at in Clermont-Ferrand!), then up the Slope of Enlightenment and finally mainstream adoption at the Plateau of Productivity.

The Gartner Hype Cycle for 2016 confirms something that I have noticed for the last few years: there are MANY

promising technologies out there... but almost all of the potential Next Big Things are still too early, too small, and not yet able to provide the kind of market moving growth that the tech sector needs as the first wave loses its power.

So bring on the Fast 500, the next generation of companies. The hardest part of surfing is not riding the big wave... it is getting in position to catch that wave before it arrives. ●

## Expectations

