

The shift hits the fan

By [Terry Levin](#)

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You don't have to be clairvoyant to figure that this is the time of year for scenario planning - but this, the year that kicked off so neatly with its demonstration of pure binary code 1111, that has had mathematicians all atwitter about its status not only as the first prime year since 2003, but also the year that is the [sum of no less than 11 consecutive prime numbers](#), will be more than different.



So what does 'primeness' mean now?

1. Prime numbers:

Indivisible by any number except itself and one, a prime number by its very nature signifies UNION - standing to together, aligning oneself within the whole or standing alone to be counted.

The trend for groups, tribes, associations, networks, cults, crowdfunding eg [Flattr.com](#), cloud sourcing etc will be intensified this year - liking, joining, participating, belonging, communing, conversing, donating, sharing in pursuit of common cultures in the new self esteem economy - it's the new inclusivity.

Coincidentally, calculators, computers and other digital devices use binary operation = { 0 ; 1 }, which is the smallest field of characteristic 2 which happens to be the only even prime number. Prime numbers are also apparently used for the encrypting and security codes that ensure credit card transactions and other personal information such as PINs and are kept secret on the Internet. Prime keeps things tight.



Cartoon courtesy of [www.wonkie.com](#)
[click to enlarge](#)

2. Prime time:

In media terms, prime time is associated with optimum revenues and viewing. An interesting trend to watch in this regard is one which sees retailers becoming publishers, allowing them to promote their product offerings in across multiple channels without the need for brokers.

This will likely put increased pressure on existing media and suppliers to act as partners, rather than competitors, all denoting a year for seriously getting our shift together.

Prime also means early - fast turnarounds, first to market, top of mind, a year of clear and decisive action.

3. Prime minister:

A title abandoned in most African countries in favour of Presidents. If you don't believe me, check out the table at the [bottom of this link](#). Perhaps it is the accountability inherent in the word minister ie someone who serves others [rather than someone who presides?] which causes an aversion to this title of office in our region?

As much as African governance demonstrates itself to be a primary hindrance to the economic advancement of its people [think Cote d'Ivoire, Uganda, Sudan, DRC, Malawi, Somalia, Zim etc], new dialogues and resource sharing must emerge out of necessity. The [Mo Ibrahim Prize](#), which supports and rewards African leaders with the best track

records in democracy and transparency in Africa, did not unfortunately find a worthy candidate last year. This is why initiatives such as [Creative Africa Network](#), created by global sportswear brand Puma, are becoming increasingly important.

As demonstrated during 2010, sport and the arts can be used to create communities of like-minded people with common goals and aspirations beyond political affiliations. Locally, new initiative www.mobilitate.co.za may yet prove another example of effective digital community building.

4. In our prime:

The time of maturity when power and vigour are greatest, in full flower, a period of great prosperity or productivity.

2011 will spawn a proliferation of new "Afrocults" - virtual communities which celebrate a rich, vibrant and positive African experience. I love the fact that the words cult, culture, cultured etc all stem from the Latin "to cultivate" - implying an active, ongoing process not something we inherit.

A touching example was the 2009 award winning "[Turn soldiers back into children](#)" campaign from [Young & Rubicam South Africa](#), commissioned by [UNICEF](#). It demonstrates a refreshing break with the traditional "Oxfam-style" approach to charity communications, in favour of a cool and uniquely African solution, which garnered masses of Internet coverage, comment and community participation - the essence of what digital is all about. Creativity is the x-factor.

5. Primary - Education + Health:

If we can see our way clear to putting, into these sectors, the same amount of focused effort and resources that we put into last years' civic improvements, how proudly prime we would all be feeling? Opportunities abound for increased collaboration between political leaders, NGOs, the private sector, the media and individuals to inspire and uplift these critical sectors. All those in favour of [boutique hospitals](#), say aye!

If you're looking for people of a benevolent bent with whom to align the good intentions of your company or brand, try www.africaguide.com/charity.htm or www.ngopulse.org/group/education.

6. Premiers - of premier rank:

A premier is the head of government of one of [South Africa's nine provinces](#), playing a role similar to that played by the president for that province. Also, possibly those with whom we might engage in greater mutual collaboration in pursuit of the above:

Eastern Cape: Noxolo Kiviet [@noxolokiviet](#)

Free State: Ace Magashule [Facebook](#)

Gauteng: Nomvula Mokonyane [see tweet](#)

KwaZulu-Natal: Zweli Mkhize [Who's Who SA](#)

Limpopo: Cassel Mathale [Who's Who SA](#)

Mpumalanga: David Mabuza [Who's Who SA](#)

North West Thandi Modise [see M&G story](#)

Northern Cape: Hazel Jenkins www.northern-cape.gov.za/index.php/executive-council/60

Western Cape: Helen Zille [@Helenzille Facebook](#)

7. Primer:

Laying foundations, bases for future flowering. In decorating terms, we might think of 2010 as having been the

necessary preparatory coating before painting. Hindsight is allowing us to appreciate the significance of some of the initiatives we may not have had the perspective to fully appreciate.

For example, the much publicised posters inspired by Ghanaian movie industry [Gollywood?], which were produced for US sports cable channel ESPN by [local outfit Am I Collective](#) succeeded not only in creating a wider appreciation of African creativity but, even more importantly, in forging an array of new digitally like-minded communities who discussed, analysed, "liked" and commented on the series of 33 posters.

What do you know, art is no longer for art's sake after all, but a powerful means towards the creation of cultures, communities and networks in which we can all participate? Expect the seeds of Afroculture planted by local and global trendsetting companies last year to bear fruit in the years to come.

8. Prime rate:

[1998 was an all-time high](#) for the prime rate, now levelling out at 9%. Good news, according to Futhi Mtoba president of the Business Unity South Africa, "against the background of stronger growth forecasts for the global economy, combined with positive domestic economic trends... interest rates 'will remain low in 2011'."

9. Prime mover:

"Mover" might yet emerge as the word of 2011 [to my mind, the word of 2010 was not "vuvuzela" for we South Africans but "LOADING..." I am hopeful this will be the year of the big [Eassy](#) for us at last].

The Twitter/mobile economy is thus still in its infancy in our region, but it is well primed. In the mobile economy, all veils of ignorance will be lifted, heralding profound and fundamental shifts in human empowerment.

Whether you have 1 or 1000 Twitter followers, you are on your way to becoming a mover. In print terms there was an old saying that "People always read the captions". Twitter, with its 140-character limit, is just that: bite size captions from which you may choose to click through to a full article or profile.

Mobile has emerged as the place where opinionistas and popular figures can wield influence and all information about the world is available to us. From the wonder of *National Geographic* to every news and information network in the world, mobile will increasingly allow everyone to be a mover and a shaker.

10. Prime choice:

In the frenzy of communication channels and outpourings of self expression, choice is everything. Creative cream will rise to the top, with the traditional ad agency striking back to tell brand stories that capture heart and minds, that uplift, outreach and include.

There is the opportunity for marketing communication professionals to really take on the responsibilities of their influence in managing big corporate resources as integral players in vital community initiatives. In this, Africa can lead the way.

11. Primordial, primeval:

Belonging to the first or earliest age or ages; original or ancient: eg a primeval forest. Another big trend to get behind, the deep longing to return to paradise, also aligned to green or environmentally consciousness movements. In 2011 the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be attempting to UNFCCC the planet, by holding its [annual symposium](#) in Durbs [Durban], SA.

Also part of this trend are websites such as [Primordia](#) which seek to restore balance and sanity to planet earth through the collaboration of scientists and well-doers.

The 'primordality' trend is about fundamentals, pure and simple. Living light, mindfully, consciously and getting behind organisations that can make a difference. We are all custodians of our planet.

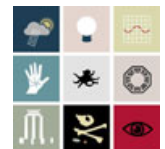
12. Prime Circle:

SA's most successful rock band: [@Prime_Circle](#). Let's go out on a limb here and predict an international hit, if not from PC, then from one of our awesome local bands, in 2011. If nothing else, check out the [latest PC album](#) produced by [Theo Crous](#) and engineered in LA by my old pal Kevin Shirley aka [Caveman](#).

That's all, have a totally primed 2011!!

With deep gratitude to [Wikipedia](#) and to [trend analyst extraordinaire Quinsy Gario](#), writing for [www.scienceofthetime.com](#) for his [incredible insights](#) and [inspiration](#).

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