

Did You Get AirPods for Christmas?

At the turn of the century, the most popular Christmas gifts among America's young teens were Pokemon playing cards and merchandise. Now, 20 years later, the hottest gift for Christmas is Apple's AirPods. The pro version of the small wireless headphones cost \$249 (before taxes).

Shortly after the kids opened their gifts on Christmas 1999, I was writing about a new technology I thought would be significant in the coming years: Bluetooth. Through inference reading and analysis, I had determined that Bluetooth could be a major innovation in technology. As it turns out, it is the very technology that allows Apple's AirPods and billions of other devices to communicate.

I wrote back then:

Pulling out a Bluetooth—what a way to start the millennium. A group of five superpower companies (Intel, IBM, Nokia, Ericsson, and Toshiba) have formed a consortium to pull a Bluetooth surprise. It looks to me as if Bluetooth will fast become as brand recognized as, say, Intel's Pentium chip.

So what is Bluetooth, and why do you care? Bluetooth is a radio wave-based language. The technology will allow several wireless devices to communicate with each other wirelessly (a voice-activated phone with a Palm Pilot with a laptop). By summer, I look for many Bluetooth-enabled devices to hit the market. How big is the market? It may be a slow start—maybe one-half million devices sold in 2000—but the explosion will come.

And explode it did. In 2018 alone nearly 4 billion devices sold

with Bluetooth. Projections for 2019 are 4.2 billion, rising to 5.2 billion devices by 2022.

The same inference reading skills I applied to examining Bluetooth technology 20 years ago are what I use in support of my family-run investment counsel firm, [Richard C. Young & Co., Ltd.](#) today. Each year, just as we did in 1999, Debbie and I cover many thousands of miles in pursuit of information we can use to measure the pulse of markets.

That research and the efforts of a full investing staff are explained each month in the client letter from Richard C. Young & Co., Ltd. If you want to understand our investment efforts and strategies better, please sign up for the letter by [clicking here](#). It's free, even for non-clients. You can also see back issues by [clicking here](#).