

A vibrant, futuristic cityscape featuring a dense cluster of tall, modern skyscrapers under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. In the foreground, a large, metallic, sculptural structure with curved, reflective surfaces is visible, possibly a public art installation or a modern building. The overall scene conveys a sense of advanced urban development and architectural innovation.

LA

# VISIONARY

## FIVE CATALYSTS FOR AN ENLIGHTENED FUTURE

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# As the Word Turns

The Clegg brothers of Americhip believe in truly moving stories

If this very article about “video in print”—VIP for short—had one of the actual devices, you’d not only be reading these words, but embedded in the page would be a screen about the size of the one on your cell phone. It would start playing a video the second you opened the page. You would see for yourself the palm trees swaying next to the blocky office building of Americhip, the L.A. company that created this technology, and see the smiling face of Kevin Clegg, the company’s president.

Through a tiny speaker attached to the page, you would hear him reassure that while video may have killed the radio star, it won’t do the same to print. “Fact is, people still like to have something to hold in their hands—they like words,” says Clegg. “Print is not dead. Boring, just-lay-there print may be dead, but exciting, interactive print is just getting started.”

VIP launched amid fanfare last August in special issues of *Entertainment Weekly* circulated in L.A. and New York, where Pepsi and CBS used it in an advertising insert touting the cola and providing trailers of the network’s fall lineup. The cardboard-thick insert might have been bulky, but that didn’t seem to block the attention VIP generated. Clegg says the morning the magazine dropped, he had some 70 phone messages before he even got to the office.

And the interest isn’t waning. Americhip has offices on four continents and a manufacturing leg in China. Clegg has had queries about the technology from places as far-flung as Bosnia. He believes the reason is that while VIP was first focused on the big-money arena of advertising, its potential goes far beyond that.



*As the Word Turns (Cont.)*

In its current incarnation, VIP has lilliputian lithium batteries that can run about 90 minutes' worth of video and be recharged with a mini USB plug. That means the device allows for information to be updated with a simple download off a PC. Future versions look to be thinner and feature WiFi.

Imagine textbooks updated with current research without having to replace the entire book, notations from your pharmacist right on a prescription label or being able to hear and see the person you're reading about in an article. And forget about the gibberish in instruction manuals. Clegg says the VIP chip could do away with the bane of technical writers—DTUs, an affectionate label meaning "difficult to understand." A video embedded in a manual could show how those stupid bookshelves are supposed to be put together.

Kevin Clegg's brother, Tim, is CEO of Americhip. A holder of numerous patents, Tim started a business in the late '80s, selling audio and lighted promotional products out of his apartment in Houston. He invented a flashing button people could wear, a novelty item that attracted the attention of big businesses like McDonald's, as well as movie studios ever eager to find the newest sizzle for media junkets. He formed Clegg Industries and began doing so much business with studios he moved to L.A. Brothers Kevin and John (now vice president of sales) soon followed him west, and Clegg Industries evolved into Americhip in 2001.

Kevin Clegg says VIP is just the latest element of the company's attempt to invent print products—anything from children's pop-up books to musical greeting cards to scent-stripped ad inserts—that use all five senses to convey a message. They call it *multisensorized*.

So, will video in print stunt literacy? Does scent on a page inhibit imagination? He is pragmatic regarding the implications of hybrid media. "People today have grown up expecting their senses to be engaged," he says. In essence, we are evolving into an era where this integrated experience will be the norm rather than the exception.

"A lot of stories compare VIP to the Harry Potter newspaper," says Clegg, referring to the novel's magical *Daily Prophet*, in which photos leap off the page. Technology still has a ways to go before producing paper-thin screens that are economically viable for mass use, he predicts. "It'll be a while before anything like that is possible."

What Clegg *doesn't* say is "impossible." —Samantha Dunn



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In our fast-food, ADD culture, lots of people are labeled visionaries. Truth is, there aren't that many of them. A genuine visionary is an alchemist, able to synthesize existing information, technology and philosophy and ignite them with a spark of radical genius. It is someone who has the perception to see past entrenched, received ideas about what is possible and conjure revolutionary concepts. In short, it is a person with the power, acumen and artistry to change our world.

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**As the Word Turns**

The Clegg brothers of Americhip believe in truly moving stories

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