

WHITEPAPER

Industry 4.0 on hyper-drive

The COVID imperative that's accelerating digital transformation



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"Digital Transformation" today preoccupies the mind-space of not just every company in the technology business but also for companies leveraging technology to differentiate, pivot and survive. From being the path to business and revenue transformation to keeping-up with the times, digital transformation is today much beyond a business imperative—a survival skill. While a series of macro-economic conditions demanded a shift to digital - like the rise of digital payments post demonetization, specific industry trends - like the rise of e-commerce as the preferred medium of convenience have continuously shaped and reshaped the world's digital direction. But, today more than the ask for transformation is equally pandemic. The narrative of how digital transformation is today at a "needed it yesterday" pace is all around us. We've effected pervasive change in the last 2 months, that we wouldn't have seen in the next two years.

While a clear definition of "Digital Transformation" is hard to come by, in my perspective – **Digital Transformation is essentially the art and science of "Disintermediation"**. It is the replacement of as many human and system intermediaries as possible with processes that automatically learn and execute, in other words processes that are cognitive and automated.

One of the most relevant and exciting frontiers of Digital Transformation is the era of the "**Deviced Web**" as I'd like to call it, or the more common Internet Of Things (IoT). As internet enabled gadgets far exceed toothbrushes in the planet – Digital Transformation also needs to be as proactive as it must be reactive. As the world constantly wants more from its Digital Devices - from Smart Phones to Smart Mobility to Smart Homes, the industry is working overtime to create new use cases while optimizing existing uses.

Digital Transformation also comes with a strong sense of sweeping ubiquity meaning different things for different people – while for users it spells incredible convenience, for creators of tech it spells endless opportunity, and for the manufacturing industry it spells a whole new format in Industrial IOT (IIOT), where the factory floor is in total transformation with sci-fi levels of robotization and automation.

Taking a cue from Gartner's Top Technology Trends for 2020, I will help navigate this deconstruction picking 4 of the Top Trends that I believe are forming the world's digital direction and narrative.

Trend #1 “Hyperautomation”



That at the simplest level means anything that can be automated will be automated. From something as elementary as the rise of iRobot replacing our house-help or the emergence of voice becoming the new UI the examples of this pervasive transformation are all around us. In the context of today’s crisis, it’s hard to not admit that businesses are exploring a reverse Honda theme of “man minimum, machine maximum”. Of course, it will have grave repercussions on the labor market, but businesses will automatically make choices that protect their interests. The rest of it will remain an ethical debate.

Trend #2 “Multiexperience”

Our electronics of yesterday are today’s providers of experiences. Yesterday’s “Idiot Box” is today’s Smart TV, from where we can order pizzas or even do an Instagram post. As movie houses explore launches on OTT platforms and mom-and-pop retailers rely on app-based delivery systems to sustain, the “Home” of today wants everything delivered—spinning off a interesting era of convergence of “To and At Home Tech” that will pace up more than ever.



Trend #3 “Democratization”



Digital transformation has invaded the least likely of spaces. From the street-vendors digital payment sticker to the Tic Tok videos of village lads, Digital Transformation has made experience accessible to everyone bridging divides that governments have tried hard to achieve and thereby multiplying the target universe. The consumer tech revolution of the last decade in a strange way prepared the population to accept separation more than even – both at the work and personal spaces. Mobile device access across laptops, tabs and phones is more pervasive than ever. Imagine how the world would have responded if the tech was still only accessible for a privileged few?

Trend #4 “Transparency & Data Privacy”

In the Digitally Transformed world-order participating in digital interactions becomes an automatic permission for exposure. While the era of anonymity is gone, the era of trust and transparency is on the rise. Digital Transformation creates closer bonds between people, shrinking time and space. With the imperatives of data privacy as table-stakes, the trust coefficient between people climbs a whole new level. And that in turn, means newer opportunities for enablement. The last 6 weeks would have witnessed the greatest demand ever for remote infrastructure and cloud environments. A demand that exposes chinks in every armor – Zoom being just one of them. The opportunity to guarantee trust in what could be seen as “exposed” systems could well be the biggest business in the year ahead.



While the early era of Digital Transformation came with the fear of “human replacement” the newer trends in the space, talk of greater level of collaboration – of people and smart systems coming together to do more. In fact, the last decade it is estimated that forty percent of the new jobs were created in highly digital-intensive sectors and digitally deliverable services make up a quarter of total services trade. There’s a sweet-spot between Industry 4.0 or the machine-centric transformation of the production world to Industry 5.0 or the human-centric transformation of the networked world. At the intersection of this transformation are the many possibilities of how life becomes better at our workspaces and homes.

The most “Transforming” bit of Digital Transformation is how it will impact almost everything as we did it yesterday. I quite like the perspective of Gerd Leonhard a European Futurist, Speaker and Author who talks of how “**the future is no longer and extension of the present**”. The future, as digital transformation will present to us will be things that we never imagined. The future gets redefined from being a timeframe to being a mindset. Dynamics such as the gig economy, the use-vs-own trend are all part of the transformation. The trends apart, the era of Digital Transformation also foretells a significant shift from status quo, six of which I find largely pertinent

1) **Voice Becoming the new UI and eventually AI becoming the new UI**

The way we interact with machines will see a significant change, traces of which we are already witnessing. And likewise, the way machines interact with us will also change, as they adapt to our asks.

2) **Lateral Adjacencies driving growth**

Businesses in the Digital frontier will segue into spaces above and beyond their traditional limits. We’re already witness to how e-com players are becoming payment systems.

3) The Zero Base transformation – resetting and rebooting

Businesses will deploy an absolute 360 degree reset and reboot transformation getting into spaces that their newer challengers are occupying, much like what we see in traditional retailers going digital.

4) Security becomes hyper-critical and the ethical dilemma of Right Vs Wrong

Possibly the biggest challenge of our times, the challenge to secure digital interactions in the context of a heightened vulnerability environment will be the decider on adoption or avoidance. The backlash for large Social Media platforms that jeopardized user data, is an indication of the zero-tolerance of users and governments alike.



5) Data is the new Oil. AI is the new Power. IoT is the new nervous system.

The era of Digital transformation will play at the interlinkage of the 3 new imperatives. Network infrastructure will evolve from being a utility to the core of the experience and that foretells significant promise for businesses in the tech infra space.

6) From Digitization to Cognification

Systems that understand asks even way before they are articulated is the new frontier in user-experience.

And behind the waves of Digital Transformation is the “IT Infrastructure” nerve center that makes every leap possible. The seismic growth of IT Infrastructure capabilities is a key enabler to the transformation that we see all around us. The strides in SRE (Site Reliability Engineering) for instance is constantly making the impossible possible – quickly shaping a “software engineered future” for each us.



Much like a Socrates: “The secret of change is to focus all your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new”, change in the era of digital transformation is the future of exciting new possibilities waiting to be discovered, and much of it presents itself loud and clear in moments of crisis.

About the Author



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Manjanath Nayak leads Microland's Global Industrial IoT business - a significant and growing focus area. He brings over 20 years of cross-functional leadership experience spanning strategy, technology innovation, service delivery, and quality. Manjanath has substantial experience leading global teams to enable offshoring of enterprise IT services to India, Hungary, UK, and China

Manjanath is part of an elite club of global professionals to clear the ITIL Expert and ITIL Service Manager exam. He is also DMAIC Master Black Belt certified, Lean Six Sigma certified, Business Continuity Expert certified, ISO 27000, BS 15000, and ISO 14000 certified.

About Microland

Microland's delivery of digital and "Making Digital Happen" allows technology to do more and intrude less. We make it easier for enterprises to adopt nextGen Digital infrastructure. We enable this using our expertise in Cloud and Data Centers, Networks, Digital Workplace, Cybersecurity and Industrial IoT. Ensuring the embrace of brilliance is predictable, reliable, and stable.

In the COVID impacted world, Microland is making digital happen for enterprises with a laser focus on services that are more relevant to our clients and prospects than ever before:

- Modern Workplace services: Enabling working from home via VDI, desktop-as-a-service, unified end point management and collaboration tools roll-out & adoption
- Network services: Supporting new normal of working by designing, deploying and scaling network infrastructure including VPN and Software defined LAN & WAN rollouts
- Cloud Services: Accelerating digital transformation journey by enabling hybrid cloud deployment to support critical workloads and ensuring business continuity
- Smart security Operations center: 24x 7 Operations center monitoring all points along a digital journey ensuring that clients are covered in their pursuit to support a world in transition

Incorporated in 1989 and headquartered in Bengaluru, India, Microland has more than 4,500 digital specialists across offices and delivery centers in Asia, Australia, Europe, Middle East and North America.