Disruptive Innovators Network

INTRODUCING

SEEING AROUND CORNERS

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT AS A SERVICE

A new DIN member offer

Introducing Seeing Around Corners

Ian Wright Disruptive Innovators Network

Welcome to the first in a series of new features looking at 'strategic foresight' — the art of future gazing and making sense of the social, business and technological changes coming towards us.

In many business sectors, strategic foresight is a valued service — something to help retailers get ready for emerging fashion or food trends or finance companies to better understand future risks.

In social housing, this is something we are yet to see. However, in these uncertain times we need more than ever to look up (a little topical movie reference there) to help us prepare the very different strategic plans that we will require in the future.

Throughout the year, we will be exploring the art (or is it becoming a science?) of future gazing through a series of thought leadership articles, webinars, and masterclasses.

For our opening foray, we present a selection of essays from a wide range of different leaders involved in future gazing, including some for whom it is a full-time occupation.

You may not agree with everything that they say, but that's not the point! We want you, as leaders, to have a 'widescreen' view of future challenges, to help you develop the future strategy for your business.

This selection of essays is intended to span a number of different viewpoints, from high level strategic to close up and personal, and to cover issues ranging from individual identity and emerging technologies to 'glass' organisations.

To help DIN members understand the potential of strategic foresight and the mindset required to become proficient at it, we will be running several sessions with one of our Seeing Around Corners contributors, Tracey Follows, Founder and CEO, Futuremade.

The first event is taking place on the 9th March and more details can be found via this link.

We hope you enjoy this initial dive into the world of 'foresight as a service'. We'd love to hear from you about what else you'd like us to cover in Seeing Around Corners, so please do get in touch to share your thoughts.

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Seven Predictions for 2022
By David Mattin

Millions will enter a whole new consumer arena
Creative agency RTFKT, best known for their virtual sneakers, have been acquired by Nike for an undisclosed sum. The start-up recently partnered with Japanese artist Takashi Murakami on a range of NFT avatars; since launch trading volume has surpassed $65 million. Meanwhile the founder of Twitch, Justin Kan, launched Fractal: a new open trading platform for gaming NFTs. Kan hopes the platform will become the centre of the exploding market for in-game devices, cars, clothes, and more.

NFT[1] was a 2021 buzzword, and that pushed some to label the phenomenon a passing fad. But by allowing unique ownership of virtual entities, NFTs are doing something remarkable: establishing an entire new arena for consumerism, and unlocking new ways for millions to collaborate, create, and display status. A tsunami of innovation is coming; we've only seen the start.

Scientists will hack the planet
Elon Musk tweeted that SpaceX will start work on initiatives to suck CO2 out of the atmosphere and turn it into rocket fuel.

In April 2021, I wrote about a plan, hatched by Harvard University scientists and sponsored by Bill Gates, to cool the planet by throwing reflective chalk dust high into the atmosphere. An experiment along those lines was cancelled in the face of local opposition. But there's a growing conviction among some in the scientific community that we can geoengineer novel climate change solutions. As the climate crisis manifests in yet more severe storms, floods, and fires next year, expect new and even more daring experiments, plus a whole lot of debate over the ethics.

You'll meet your first virtual human
South Korean presidential candidate Yoon Suk-yeol launched an AI-fuelled avatar of himself, inventively named AI Yoon Suk-yeol. Yoon, the candidate for the main opposition People Power Party, says the avatar will campaign on his behalf in parts of the country he can't visit. AI Yoon Suk-yeol sports a photorealistic rendering of Yoon's face, and a deepfake version of his voice.

[1] A non-fungible token (NFT) is a non-interchangeable unit of data — such as a picture, video or audio — stored on a block chain, that can be sold or traded

The virtual humans are coming; I wrote about their rise way back in November 2020 in Kim Kardashian, Virtual Humans, and How Weird Becomes Mainstream. The story has only accelerated. See Unreal Engine's MetaHuman Creator, a tool that allows anyone to make their own photorealistic avatar. Meanwhile, virtual humans start up Soul Machines — tagline 'say hello to digital people' — recently announced a partnership with Microsoft. If you haven't yet had your first interaction with an AI-fuelled almost human, then expect it to happen next year.

Automation will remodel the economy
US-based Tyson Foods said they will invest over $1.3 billion across the next three years to increase automation at their meat plants. CEO Donnie King says a lack of workers means the company currently can't fulfil booming demand.

This story is informed by deep technological and economic shifts that will shape our shared future. Triggered by the pandemic, a labour shortage is afflicting much of the Global North. In response, employers — including those in food service, agriculture, and manufacturing — are turning to automation in record numbers. McDonald's, for example, are experimenting with the automation of drive-thrus. Will robots lead us to a world of leisured abundance? Or will we face rising inequality, diminished career options for millions, and strange new forms of depersonalisation? These questions have been looming for years, but in 2022 they'll become impossible to ignore.

We'll figure out the pandemic's lifestyle legacy
In further news from South Korea, the Guardian recently reported on the country's drive to create an untact society. A society, that is, that minimises in-person social interaction to protect health and promote efficiency. Think staffless stores, and virtual GP visits. The city of Seoul has even announced plans to build a virtual world in which citizens can remotely interact with public officials.

Does an untact society sound a bit dystopian? Yes, it does. When it comes to reshaping lifestyles in the wake of the pandemic, most countries won't go this far. Still, events in South Korea are a reminder that so much of what we call the new normal remains unfixed. How often should knowledge workers traipse into the office? Should we stop kissing friends on the cheeks when we meet? Are pre-pandemic business travel habits ever coming back? In 2022, we will keep obsessing over these questions; we may even settle a few.

Machine minds will see the world their way
The Megatron Transformer, an AI developed by the Applied Deep Research team at Nvidia, was invited to a debate on AI ethics at the Oxford Union. The team behind it say it was trained on all of Wikipedia, 64 million English news articles, and 38 gigabytes worth of Reddit threads. Asked to offer its opinion on ethical AI, the Megatron said: *AI will never be ethical. It is a tool, and like any tool, it is used for good and bad. There is no such thing as a good AI, only good and bad humans.*

> *Machine intelligence is set to transform our lives, and multiple industries, in the years ahead. In 2022 the underlying philosophical debate will only intensify: can machines ever be said to think?*

Wise words indeed. But the events of 2021 — from Open Ai's incredible natural language model GPT-3 to DeepMind's solution to the protein folding problem — left no room for doubt: machine intelligence is set to transform our lives, and multiple industries, in the years ahead. In 2022 the underlying philosophical debate will only intensify: can machines ever be said to think? But via repeated exposure, millions will become more accustomed to the idea that while AIs are not conscious, and certainly not human, they are developing new ways of seeing the world that are all their own. For centuries, we have watched our machines; now, they will start looking back.

David Mattin is the founder of New World Same Humans, a weekly newsletter on trends, technology, and society. newworldsamehumans.com

On horrible hybrids, 'death by meeting' days, and reinventing the ways we work

Dr. Nicola J. Millard, Principal Innovation Partner, BT

Around 70 percent of corporates have stated that they intend to work in a hybrid way post-pandemic. This tends to boil down to discussions about how many days of the week people should be in the office — which misses the point.

Hybrid is a model where there's flexibility in terms of both place and time. The focus is less about where and when the work is done — but how the work is done. This will depend on who you are, what you are doing and the people that you are working with. There is no one-size-fits-all template.

Hybrid workplaces are likely to be digital by default — it is not the office but the digital platform that is the one common ground. The choice of technologies really does not matter, the key is creating a simple, seamless, and secure employee experience.

Hybrid working is not as easy as putting technology in. It requires us to override our Neanderthal programming — the principal problem being 'proximity bias.' Our brains are wired to be tribal. We trust people that we see on a regular basis. If we divide into two tribes — the office tribe and the remote one — they can very easily go to war (Frankie Goes to Hollywood were right).

> *Hybrid working will not be easy. Although it is underpinned by the collaboration, connectivity, and cloud technologies that we have come to rely on during the pandemic, we must answer searching questions about what productive and healthy work looks like when it is untethered from time and space*

There is no better illustration of this than the dreaded hybrid meeting. When everyone is sitting in their own celebrity square in a fully remote meeting, everyone is on equal footing. When they are split between physical and digital space, out of sight can very easily become out of mind. The room can very easily dominate the conversation and, if they are not on the conferencing platform, they may miss side conversations on chat, or even raised hands from remote participants. Again, the common ground is digital, so all participants need to be on the digital platform, even if they are together physically.

This also challenges the traditional meeting room design of a single camera. Remote participants have little chance of seeing who is in the room and who is talking. Dynamic or multiple cameras, whether fixed or on PC/smart phones, are required to develop a better sense of presence for those joining the meeting remotely. Sound needs to be captured from the whole of the room, rather than the person sitting closest to the mic. Noise cancellation and spatial sound can kill interference and echo. Lighting is also important — with meeting rooms potentially starting to resemble movie sets.

Increasingly, meetings are taking place outside the office. They may involve the office café, a 'coffice' (co-working space), or the home — the key is making them easy to set up for that inclusive, movie quality experience wherever participants happen to be.

It is not all about the technology. It also involves good meeting management. Facilitation of hybrid meetings has a lot in common with physical ones in terms of good practice. Hybrid meetings need structure, and they need to be facilitated so that they are inclusive.

Meetings themselves also need to come under scrutiny. In the old days of co-location, meetings involved friction — you had to book rooms and allow for travel times. In a frictionless remote environment, we often wake up with an impending sense of Zoom (other platforms are available). We simply lift and shift our analogue synchronous ways into a world where we can frictionlessly schedule a full 'death by meeting' day. This has caused people to complain about video fatigue as their brains turn to mush somewhere around mid-afternoon. Although video fatigue is real, the root problem is meetings themselves. An endless procession of meetings is not a recipe for a productive day. We may need to look at doing more asynchronously or limiting the window where synchronous meetings can take place.

Hybrid working will not be easy. Although it is underpinned by the collaboration, connectivity, and cloud technologies that we have come to rely on during the pandemic, we must answer searching questions about what productive and healthy work looks like when it is untethered from time and space.

All this potentially adds up to a massive increase in the number of people working away from offices than prior to the pandemic — and that has an impact on urban economies, housing, transportation systems, and, critically, how we design work itself. We have an opportunity to stop designing work around time and location and start designing it around people and outcomes.

Global business trends in 2022: Forrester's predictions

By Phil Brunkard, Forrester

Each October, Forrester releases predictions which forecast the dynamics impacting on different industries and disciplines in the year ahead. Forrester's predictions help our clients see around the corner, providing a clear vision on what is to come. Here we highlight the predictions of most interest to DIN members.

2022 — The year to be bold

2022 will go down as the year executives were forced to care about employee experience. AI adoption and tech spending will accelerate. Business leaders will lay the groundwork for bold decisions by further investing in technology and refocusing business strategies. Greenwashing will crumble as genuine sustainability becomes a must-have. Consumers will continue testing new ways to meet their post-pandemic needs, while thinking about the potential long-term effects of the pandemic on health, lifestyle and ways of working. Their new behaviours will create new economies. People will seek out products that offer greater happiness, comfort and wellbeing. They will be more willing to try out unconventional brands, alternative ways to buy, and innovative systems of value like non-fungible tokens (NFTs).

Companies will fail at 'anywhere-work,' and it will not be the fault of the virus

Ten percent of companies will commit to a fully remote future. For the remaining 90%, vaccine mandates will lead to complications but will not be the cause of most return-to-office failures.

The real pain will fall on the 60% of companies shifting to a hybrid model. One-third of attempts at 'anywhere-work' will fail because leaders will still design meetings, job roles, and promotion opportunities around face-to-face experiences. When productivity suffers as a result, the same leaders will blame hybrid work rather than looking in the mirror at the real culprit.

A smaller number of failures will come from the 30% of companies that insist on a full 'in-office' model. Attrition at these companies will increase above their industry averages. *Monthly* resignation rates will rise as high as 2.5% until executives feel the pain and finally commit to making hybrid work… work.

European businesses will invest up to €3.3 billion in automation to boost productivity. Compound annual growth rates in 2022 will be at around 33% for robotic process automation (RPA) and 13% for digital process automation (DPA). Much of this investment will focus on the retail and hospitality sectors. European retailers, such as ASOS, Sephora, and Zara, already deploy automation for personalisation and predictive purposes.

In 2022, 60% of security incidents will involve external third parties

With cyber attacks continuing to target smaller vendors and suppliers, SolarWinds-style headlines will plague all organisations that do not invest in the risk management trifecta: people, process, and technology. Smart companies will ensure the tech stack (not a single tool or Excel) includes risk assessment, supply chain mapping, real-time risk intelligence, and business continuity management.

Customers will want over half of pandemic-era services to become the 'new normal'

Some organisations assume they can resume pre-pandemic ways. But that is a mistake. Consumers have grown used to virtual access and will continue to want it (e.g., curbside delivery pickup, remote meeting options and digital payments as the norm). Consumers will expect to see digital experiences embedded into standard offline experiences and for this to work well. This will put pressure on companies to manage increasingly hybrid customer experiences across physical and digital touchpoints that require connected data, ecosystem thinking, and orchestration of customer, employee, and partner journeys. Those who successfully navigate the transition to the new normal will avoid a wholesale reversal to pre-pandemic ways and analyse current customer insights and research to evaluate which services to keep, adjust, or toss.

25% more EU businesses will appoint chief sustainability officers

In the last 12 months, the EU has 1) adopted a climate adaptation policy; 2) introduced the first delegated act for its taxonomy defining environmental objectives for EU climate adaptation and mitigation; and 3) decided to make corporate sustainability reporting standardised and mandatory for more companies from 2023. But EU consumers are sceptical — Forrester's 2021 data reveals that just 34% trust companies when they say they will commit to tackling climate change. 'Green washers' that have only embraced sustainability for public relations purposes will struggle to adapt. Organisations that truly adapt working practices to achieve sustainability will retain customer trust.

The UK will diverge from EU regulations, but only UK consumers will notice

In 2022, the UK will exercise its post-Brexit ability to make significant changes to the current EU environmental and data protection regulations.

> *Just 34% trust companies when they say they will commit to tackling climate change. Organisations that truly adopt working practices to achieve sustainability will retain customer trust*

The UK promises to free up personal data transfers to a new set of countries, including the US, and to relax privacy requirements to make space for a more innovative, data-driven agenda.

But, as every UK-based business that has customers or employees in Europe must still comply with EU rules, it will make little difference other than to UK consumers, who will contend with laxer local standards.

Forrester's predictions show the challenges and opportunities ahead.

The predictions showcase our bold calls for the next year across several domains. To learn more, please visit our Predictions 2022 Portal.
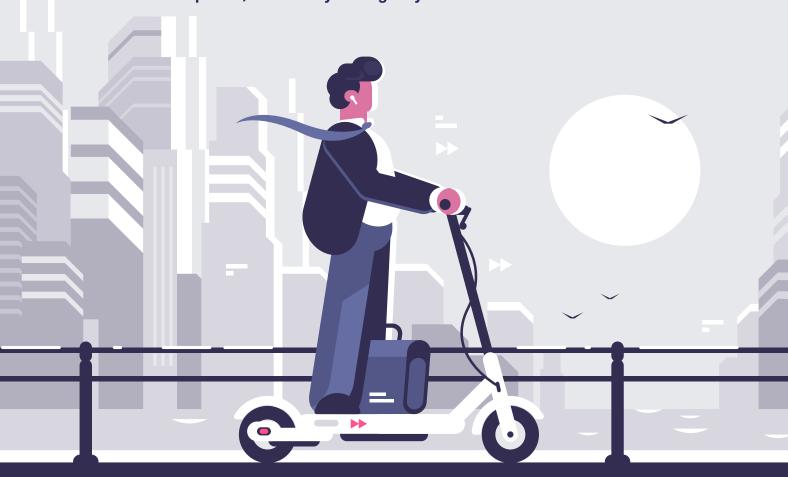
Phil Brunkard is CIO Executive Partner & Senior Analyst at Forrester

2022 is a Crossroads:
Life is Short, Make it Count

By Tracey Follows

This year is all about mobility, or lack of it. It's about spaces and places and how we get to them, how we access them, and how we record our experiences in them.

Restrictions have been put up on populations and nations, as well as regions. Now, in some ways, those restrictions will apply to reality itself. For as we enter the third year of what will become a decade of Covid, the narrative of the metaverse rings loudly in our ears as well as online. Everywhere you look, there is a retail store or a fitness brand, fashion brand or a hospitality venue pointing the way towards a virtual world offering a space or a place, or an event, that they want you to be part of, not literally but digitally.

The large platforms are keen to accelerate this trend, epitomised by Facebook's rebrand to Meta at the end of last year. For some time, commentators have expressed concern that social networks are now so large and ubiquitous that they are giving nation states a run for their money. Once they become the digital landscapes of the virtual world, they will be the leaders, the rulers, and the governors of our virtual lives. Truth is, we will be abiding not by rule of law, but by terms of service, as the metaverse signals the ongoing merger of the citizen and the user-consumer, towards its completion.

What does that mean for us? It means that we might find that access to virtual spaces and places will be dependent on the technology platforms such as Meta. More than that, access to the physical world and its spaces and places will be guarded by technology applications too. As the everyday services of life that we have enjoyed as physical human beings become increasingly digitised, access to those services will require digitised verification too. It is not so much of a leap to imagine access to welfare services, educational services, leisure or even local business needs requiring a digital verification of some sort, to be permitted access. This is not far-fetched, one only needs to think about the Covid pass, introduced on the premise of it giving the user access to certain places and services, not accessible to others. An evolved version of this could well become a digital access for telehealth services in the future. If so, who would be at all surprised?

Back in the 'real' world, there's much chat about the 15-minute city. In part a reaction to the growing unpopularity of the car (not amongst owners but amongst urbanites able to cycle to work without having to worry about dropping off kids or transporting the family shopping); and in part an expectation of a workforce that will want to work from home in the future. However, whilst home-working and home-schooling were certainly the predominant modes during the pandemic due to their convenience in the short-term, they have also proved exhausting in the long-term. And no-one finds limitations to one's ability to travel and explore much of an aspiration. There's a growing sense that under such an initiative, our mobility would be very much curtailed. And that should be resisted.

In summary, what we are seeing is a period of de-growth, de-industrialisation, and de-moralisation. We must not succumb. This year will present very many challenges in health, the economy, and social order. We need an aspiration, a renewed sense of exploration and after two years of hibernating — a revelation. A revelation that life is short, that we must live it to its fullest. As many moments as we dare must be enjoyed. And that includes whatever we do for work too. As we emerge from physical isolation, we must not settle for emotional, psychological or locational restriction. If that has become a habit, it is a habit we must break.

> *We are on the cusp of a newly organised community, and society. One that is not managed top-down in the sense of command and control. One that is complex and contradictory, but exciting to navigate oneself through*

We are on the cusp of a newly organised community, and society. One that is not managed top-down in the sense of command and control. But one that is complex and contradictory, but exciting to navigate oneself through. This is the battle between decentralisation and re-centralisation. The former promises a new kind of networked arrangement of collectives, and communities working creatively, having less and less need for authority figures or even authority at all. The newly emerging world of web3[1], NFTs and DAOs[2] — all various aspects of new value exchanges in a networked world, must be grasped now. This is not a time for restriction but a time for exploration. 2022 will be that fork in the road — do we dare take the path less travelled? Only if we believe we can travel anywhere we want. We can — and we should.

Tracey Follows | Futurist, Founder CEO of Futuremade Consulting | Author of The Future of You

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web3
[2] A DAO is a decentralised autonomous organisation. It's an organisation that is networked like a community and has no central hub.

Accurate business forecasting is the key to innovation in an uncertain world

By Tristan Kromer

2021 has been the year that quantitative data made a comeback. For years, Lean Startup, Agile, and Design Thinking principles ruled innovation, and people fought tooth and nail against committing to ROI numbers for early-stage innovation. But in doing so, we threw away the business case and the importance of rigorous data.

Supply chains and marketing campaigns cannot function without predictions. Over the past two years we've seen our best-laid plans disrupted. We've rediscovered the importance of planning for an uncertain future, and of having concrete numbers to plan with. But large organizations are still making the same forecasting mistakes.

These numbers are critical to make pivot, persevere, or kill decisions. Innovation leaders making decisions based on gut feel are handicapping themselves and their futures. Anyone can be lucky once, but being lucky year after year requires innovation accounting and an iterative innovation strategy.

Transforming qualitative data from early-stage experiments to quantitative estimates usable in a real business case isn't easy. No one likes doing the math. But it's necessary to forgo innovation theatre for a predictable return that corporations can invest in.

Leaders need to:

► Integrate qualitative and quantitative research methods
► Make data-driven decisions
► Create an iterative, data-driven strategy

Like you, I'm looking forward to 2022 with a clearer set of tools to build the future.

Tristan Kromer is an Innovation Coach and founder of Kromatic
Kromatic — Lean Startup Coaching & Innovation Design

Customer-centricity, smart assets, storytelling and relationships: the four 'essentials' of #FutureProofRealEstate

By Antony Slumbers

The demand for real estate is fundamentally changing. The Covid-19 pandemic has seen customer attitudes and behaviours adapt to a new set of imperatives; where to work, where to live, what matters and what does not? How do we respond to this change?

Across all real estate asset classes, it boils down to four themes. By responding effectively to these foundational pillars, we can create products and services that are fit-for-purpose, and #FutureProof.

Theme 1: Customer centricity
Steve Jobs provides the canonical example. Shortly after returning to Apple, during a Q&A session at its Developers Conference, he was challenged on why developers should have faith in him, as he seemed to not know that much about technology. After a pause, where he was clearly angry with the question, he said:

"You've got to start with the customer experience and work backwards to the technology... As we have tried to come up with a strategy and a vision for Apple, it started with 'What incredible benefits can we give to the customer? Where can we take the customer?'"

Steve Jobs was right: start with the customer and work backwards to the technology. Substitute real estate for technology and you have the best starting point for any business plan.

Theme 2: Creating 'Smart' assets
We should no longer be the providers of dumb shells. We should be the providers of hardware, software and services that work together to offer our customers the environment and services they need for their 'jobs to be done.'

That is what a 'Smart' asset is. A building or a space or technology that 'understands' what its purpose is. Many smart assets are not that smart. Anyone can kit out a building with tools, technologies and the latest gizmos. And many do. However, only a few deliberatively design their buildings to optimise the user experience (UX) — specifically developed for the type of customer that they wish to serve.

Only a few businesses deliberatively design their buildings to optimise the user experience (UX) — specifically developed for the type of customer that they wish to serve

Theme 3: Storytelling

Why is someone going to buy, lease or rent your real estate? Do they have to? If the answer is yes, then you can skip this theme. Historically, 95% of readers would have skipped this section. In most situations, our customers had to buy, lease or rent our real estate. That is why real estate has made so many people so wealthy over the centuries.

Today our customers most likely do not need to do business with us. They have optionality, as the economists say. They can satisfy their needs in other ways. Hence, we need to become story tellers.

Most analogous for real estate are the premium car brands. The most important customer for Audi, BMW or Mercedes is the person buying their first premium car. Like the Jesuits, once they have you, you are likely to stay. People buy into brands like this because they offer a certain style, a certain user experience, and certain ethos. And they invest more than money into them. They start to become to an extent, defined by them. I am this 'type' of person. In real estate we are going to see the development of brands, across all asset types, as powerful as these.

Theme 4: Relationships

The real estate industry has always been proud to call itself a relationship business. Usually, however, those relationships have been with other people in the real estate sector — so the industry has ended up talking to itself.

People spend 90% of their time indoors and in real estate we connect with people for longer than any other service provider. As real estate providers, we are in the best position to service the needs of our customers.

We can move way beyond just letting them space by the foot or metre. We can help them be happy, healthy and productive. We can enhance their pleasure whilst shopping or make them more comfortable when at home. We can do much more than we ever have before. But only if we own the relationship.

These are the four essentials of #FutureProofRealEstate, where humanity and technology meet, and we put customers first.
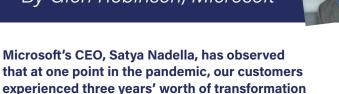
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Tech trends for 2022
By Glen Robinson, Microsoft

Microsoft's CEO, Satya Nadella, has observed that at one point in the pandemic, our customers experienced three years' worth of transformation in three months. 2022 is all about maintaining this momentum.

Cloud has played a crucial role in enabling this momentum, and we expect this trend to accelerate. We have observed an uptick in the adoption of cloud-based data platforms to store, process and analyse business data. Although the concept of data storage and analysis is not new, cloud-based technologies allow organisations to unlock additional value they did not have before.

For example, automated processes enable the creation of comprehensive data catalogues which automate the detection of personal or classified information. This makes data discoverable.

By deploying cloud-based identity, security and privacy controls, organisations are then able to collaborate with third parties in a data ecosystem. A common collaboration use case involves the sharing of smart building data with local fire and rescue services. Sharing data on building schematics, construction materials and real time occupancy facilitates a faster rescue services response.

Almost every organisation I speak with now wants to create a similar data platform or has started that journey. Most have focused on use cases, such as sustainability, which produce immediate value and do not take unnecessary risks with their data. The collation, processing and sharing carbon emissions data is a key step in every organisation's journey to become net zero. Increasingly, the focus has broadened from the direct emissions of a single organisation, but that of its entire supply chain — which is where data access and data sharing with third parties becomes necessary.

Once organisations have learned lessons from this stage of the journey, the next steps for these data platforms will involve use cases that drive operational efficiency, improved customer services, accurate regulatory reporting.

The transformation does not stop there. We are privileged to work with pioneering organisations who are already on the next stage of this journey — using the data in their platform to build a digital twin. Real time sensor data enables businesses to undertake virtual environmental audits without on-site physical inspection. The value then comes from taking the data to build models and run 'what if' scenario planning. Virtual learning is much cheaper than learning through real world mistakes.

The data acquired in these digital platforms will drive further innovation in machine learning in coming years. Machine learning depends on high quality labelled data. When organisations store and process data in a platform and visualise it through analytics and systems like a digital twin, they can identify data quality issues early, deal with them quickly and use the data to train machine learning models.

> *Virtual learning is much cheaper than learning through real world mistakes*

When their data sets are large enough, organisations can create accurate models that deliver the next level of business/customer/operations insights they need to maintain competitive advantage.

Pre-pandemic, we were talking to multiple organisations about the benefits of data platforms, digital twins and machine learning.

During the pandemic, many organisations have moved from talking to doing, rapidly building the foundations of their data platforms. I see this trend continuing in 2022 and beyond.

For me, 2022 marks the phase where cloud-based data platforms become the norm as more organisations come to appreciate the value that this data will unlock.

Glen Robinson is UK National Technology Officer at Microsoft

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