

Smarter chatbots to a seamless multi-cloud environment

 By [Rob Lith](#)

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We live in an age of disruption with highly influential trends like Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning and cloud computing affecting almost every corner of our lives, from business all the way through to socialisation.



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2019 is expected to further transformative developments, providing us with new ways to meet consumer expectations, utilise data and work more efficiently.

Here are the trends likely to cause a stir in the ICT sector in the year ahead.

Smarter chatbots and the upskilling of the workforce

2018 brought an influx of chatbots and AI-driven technology, but many of these experiences needed major improvements.

These improvements will continue to be bolstered by natural language processing (NLP) and sentiment analytics, where NLP assists businesses with gathering insights to improve their services, and sentiment analytics should, hopefully, be able

to pick up when a customer is distressed about the issue at hand.



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The combination of NLP and sentiment analytics has the potential to pick up nuances to make the entire interaction as 'human' as possible, with a likelihood that these bot systems may become so sophisticated that they will be able to pick up on human emotions and react accordingly.

Machine learning enables a library of all the common speech patterns people use, which means that these bots are also likely to become better at conversing with customers and understanding what they are asking for.

However, as we know, bots don't possess reasoning skills or compassion and as such, human intervention will still play a major role in these kinds of interactions. AI has and will continue to impact the workforce, but employees are going to have to upskill themselves to take over the first-line, mundane tasks from bots and effectively handle the second level of support services.

The omnipresent power of data

With more and more companies making use of collected data to influence important decisions regarding product, services and strategy, it is no surprise that data utilisation forms the core of many digital-transformation trends.

This driving force will only get stronger as the years go on. In the past, users had to be quite involved and skilled at analysing data but now business-intelligent platforms, such as QlikSense and Tableau, generate meaningful business analytics and trend reports for you - a testament to the way data impacts our everyday life.



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Even an application as commonplace as Gmail now helps you compose your email responses, offering suggestions to fill in the rest of sentences as you normally would. And with this ever-increasing processing power that boosts machine learning, we are likely to see organisations in every sector taking full advantage of the data that they have on hand, as well as the information they are able to collect.

A seamless multi-cloud environment

Every business has different needs, and these are constantly shifting as the business grows, which means that a single public or private cloud can't possibly be a one-size-fits-all solution.

Sometimes, a connected approach of two or more cloud types is required, especially if the particular company is using the cloud for various functions, such as storage and app deployment, and needs to run multiple workloads.

Many of the cloud giants have already come to the party, with Amazon incorporating private clouds in their offering and Microsoft mixing on-premise and cloud infrastructures together in the form of hybrid Azure.

This connected cloud trend all boils down to one thing – every business is striving to get the most value from their digital transformation journey, and a mix of workloads running on public, private and hybrid models is a great way to do this.

Enhanced customer experience

With the increased adoption of multi-channel communication services, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems are changing significantly and will continue to do so.

Website chats, for example, immediately provide important and relevant customer information to call centre agents so that they can be more proactive in their discussions with customers, which in turn, improves the overall customer journey.



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Through CRM systems, client services will now be looking at deeply integrating their front-end phase from multi-channels to business processes in the background. By doing this, the middleman can fall away, and the customer can be given their answer immediately, putting them at ease and allowing for a more seamless interaction between the business and its clients.

Technological advancements not only alter the way in which we work, play and interact, but they also help us grasp a better understanding of our customers and their individual needs.

Considering the highlights above, 2019 stands to be a year of exciting, fundamental shifts in this regard – as the long-discussed potential of digital transformation becomes reality for a great many more companies as they embrace its positive effects. Now's the time to get onboard to grow your business's profitability, not to mention safeguard it in a challenging, highly competitive environment.

ABOUT ROB LITH

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