

5 tech trends heading our way in the new year

 By [Esti Kilian](#)

6 Jan 2021

What a difference a year makes. Twelve months ago, most technology forecasts centred around the 4th Industrial Revolution and the need for businesses to use the newest technologies to stay competitive. This is still true a year later, but Covid-19 has changed the direction of travel. In 2021, South African businesses will be using technology first and foremost to adjust to a 'next normal'.



Esti Kilian, head of business development and marketing at Itec SA

Here's my view of the top five tech trends that will impact local businesses in the coming year.

The Internet of Behaviours (IoB)

Over the past few years, we've seen the rise of the Internet of Things (IoT), the network of interconnected physical objects – from geysers to data centres - that gather and exchange information and data over the internet. The Internet of Behaviours (IoB) takes this data and uses it to make sense of human behaviour. This is critical at a time when the pandemic is changing the way we work, live and shop.

IoB's premise is that devices related to location, facial recognition and more can act as guides to mapping behaviour: like using data from telematics to change the driving behaviour of fleet drivers, for example, or using facial recognition data from security systems to track customer movements within a retail store. This doesn't just give insights to past performance but allows companies to predict future behaviour more accurately.

The cybersecurity mesh

No, we're not entering the Matrix. The cybersecurity mesh essentially builds a security perimeter around any digital asset or person, no matter where they are. This has been coming for a while with companies that have mobile or remote workforces, but as more people start working from home, we're going to see the cybersecurity mesh supporting more

digital access control requests than ever.

Most business cyber assets now lie outside the traditional physical and logical security perimeters, and this is the most practical way to ensure secure access to applications and data.

Hyper-automation

Hyper-automation means that anything that can and should, be automated in an organisation, will be. It was already gaining momentum before 2020, but was turbo-charged by the pandemic with an almost overnight requirement for everything to be 'digital first.' We're already working with several clients to identify and automate as many approved business and IT processes as possible as they look to streamline their operations and move to the 'better normal'.

Greater cloud momentum

The move to the cloud is nothing new, but we saw many businesses caught off guard during the lockdown. Not having the right cloud strategies in place made it difficult and cumbersome - and in some cases, downright impossible - to work and deploy a productive remote workforce.

Today, most enterprises and SMEs are moving their critical businesses online, and they will be looking for trusted technology partners to help them make the transition as rapidly and seamlessly as possible. What they will realise is that going onto the cloud will actually help them emerge from the crisis even stronger, as cloud unlocks numerous opportunities without heavy upfront IT investment.

A new focus on employee experience

In 2020, it quickly became clear which companies had a good grip on employee experience and which didn't. Those who did were able to make sudden and immediate changes to their way of working far more easily, and this was critical to making the switch to working from home.

The new year will see even more pressure put on technology functions and partners to create a better employee experience in the face of tight budgets. Top of mind will be enterprise connectivity integration to allow teams to use company infrastructure instead of their own, using shared VPNs and APNs to ensure cybersecurity compliance, and using cloud computing to deliver IT platforms and access to business-critical information.

ABOUT ESTI KILIAN

Esti Kilian is head of business development and marketing at Itec South Africa. She is a seasoned senior marketing executive, leader and strategist, with expertise in B2B, Channel and B2C marketing.

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