



CIONET UK BUSINESS COMMUNITY PROGRAMME:

SO, WHAT'S
NEW FOR 2022?

Roger Camrass

CIONET UK

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On 26 January 2022, five panellists and more than 100 delegates joined CIONET UK's first Community event of the year. The event was moderated by Roger Camrass, Research Director of CIONET International, and organised by Jenniffer Tang, Director of the UK Community Programme. It was sponsored by EY, Gitlab, Hitachi, Zscaler and UiPath. Here is a summary of the discussion, edited by freelance business journalist, Mark Samuels.

Introduction: The 'Intelligent Era'

David Smith, Chief Executive at Global Futures and Foresight, set the scene by introducing what he referred to as the 'Intelligent Era', which involves the automation of digital assets. This era will necessitate a focus on data and personalisation, where IT will enable the business to do new and exciting things. Companies must embrace this innovation opportunity, yet David pointed to research that suggests just 8% of CEOs believe their business models will survive digital disruption. Senior executives must create new business models that take advantage of technologies such as 5G, the Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing. Companies will need to think about how they can operate fundamentally differently to disrupt their markets.

How are sensors and data changing patient outcomes for the better?

Maureen Wedderburn, Non-Executive Chair on the Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre Supervisory Board, explained how automation is driving productivity increases in pharmaceutical manufacturing. Sensors are being used to link operations and create insight that improves performance across the supply chain. Products can be tracked and traced across the life cycle globally, including monitoring temperature variations. On the shop floor, insights from sensor data can boost product quality, which helps create better healthcare for patients at lower cost.

Rapid product development due to COVID-19 provided a rarity in pharmaceuticals: analytical data on patient outcomes. New compute power, meanwhile, has opened data-led research opportunities. There is potential across databases of genetics and onto specialist web sites like 23andMe to bring information together and develop personalised medicine, either in areas of critical need, such as oncology, or through gene and stem-cell therapy.

The Medicine Manufacturing Innovation Centre is running 'grand challenges' with industry and academic institutions to develop answers to big questions, including the automation of pharmacy dispensing in hospitals. Providing answers to those kinds of questions will make it easier to develop and deliver the personalised medicines of the future.

How can telecommunications firms survive and thrive in an age of digitalisation?

Fotis Karonis, Executive Vice President at Capgemini, said there's been an exponential increase in data as businesses move IT operations to the cloud and take advantages of 5G and IoT. Telecommunications firms are trying to become technology companies that enable hyperconnectivity and unlock value for businesses. These firms will monetise their network investments by moving closer to the edge of enterprises via developments such as private network models, microservices-based applications, and the provision of specialist services to businesses.

However, incumbent telcos have struggled to make this transition so far because they have tried to develop the future of networks based on models that worked in the past. Telcos have failed to create new business models that monetise the huge growth in the use of cloud and data. Rather than embracing disruption, incumbent telcos are wedded to legacy infrastructures that drag them down.

While telcos have failed to respond to disruption, other Big Tech companies – such as Apple, Google, Amazon and Microsoft – have embraced cloud and data, creating new business models. The result of this innovation in Apple's case is a company that was valued at more than \$3trn at the start of 2022. The challenge for telecoms firms is to not get disintermediated from this data rich space, particularly as new fast-growing technologies, such as the metaverse, emerge.

What does the right digital architecture look like?

Michel Savoie, Partner in Technology Consulting at EY, said organisations must get their technology right – if they don't, they won't survive. Employees want to connect with customers in a personalised way, to communicate with stakeholders, and to capture new opportunities. However, innovation is dependent on another reality: an effective digital architecture. Michel said four characteristics define the right digital architecture – smart, agile, engaging, and industrialised:

- **Smart** – Capturing and standardising all organisational activities, whether that's in processes, customer interactions or between machines
- **Agile** – Delivering technology in an automated manner and taking advantage of tools, such as microservices, that allow organisations to react quickly to new market demands
- **Engaging** – Personalising interactions with stakeholders while also recognising the importance of standardisation, as different departments engage in specific ways
- **Industrialise** – Putting in place platforms that have common components, which can be deployed across disparate business units depending on use cases

Satisfying those four characteristics isn't easy. Michel encouraged IT leaders to start with the basics: create a separate presentation to build services quickly; develop an orchestration layer to communicate with all your systems; and use the cloud. IT leaders should avoid trying to 'boil the ocean' or assume transformation is simple. Successful companies recognise the existence of legacy, but also undertake tactical programmes that show the business the value of change.

How can we scale robotic process automation (RPA)?

Caroline Grey, Chief Customer Office at UiPath, said that while RPA had already shown it can improve productivity and engagement, it's become clear during the past year that RPA can also scale. Enterprises are using the cloud to collect information from a range of complex systems and build a platform for the introduction of RPA and AI.

Caroline gave an example of a finance firm that has transformed its technology stack by moving to the cloud. This firm used RPA to consolidate third-party data. This implementation of RPA has improved staff productivity and boosted customer experiences. Caroline also talked about a sportswear brand that is using RPA across its supply chain to predict where stock will be limited. The company can satisfy market demand by ensuring customers receive goods in a timely manner.

Caroline said companies that want to make the most of RPA must use a solid change programme to ensure humans are an integral part of the automation loop. She said senior sponsorship for this change programme, and an ability to take on risk, are also crucial factors for success.

How will technology help level the playing field between home and office in a hybrid world?

Amit Sinha, CTO, Private Equity at Microsoft, said hybrid work is here to stay. Business leaders must reimagine their organisations with a focus on people, places and processes. Technology will become a digital fabric that bridges the gap between physical and virtual worlds. This fabric will become a place where you no longer rely on physical spaces to connect and collaborate. The use of technology will mean people attending hybrid meetings digitally will feel connected. Technology will also support seamless collaboration in immersive spaces, such as the metaverse.

Changing organisational policy, such as establishing who works remotely and how, to enable the flexibility and empowerment of the workforce will be key. Business leaders will then need to think about how technology enables people to collaborate in this hybrid world. It's worth noting that private equity (PE) organisations are now looking at opportunities associated to hybrid work. COVID has been a major accelerator for these trends and PE firms are keen to explore new opportunities.

Amit suggested technology and data are tools to help solve business challenges and open new opportunities. As organisations reorganise, business leaders must embed technology into the fabric of the company, whether that's HR, the supply chain or front-end services. They must create clarity in governance and simplification in processes. Finally, they must commit to the adoption of digital solutions, ensuring their organisations use technology as a toolkit to build lasting transformation.



Roger Camrass
Lead researcher

A pioneer of today's Internet as an ARPA research fellow at MIT in the seventies, Roger has spent over forty five years helping corporations harness the power of new technologies such as cloud, mobile communications, e-commerce, voice recognition and satellite. He was a partner at EY responsible for e-commerce during the dot.com boom. He is a graduate of Cambridge University and MIT, and a visiting professor at the University of Surrey.

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