

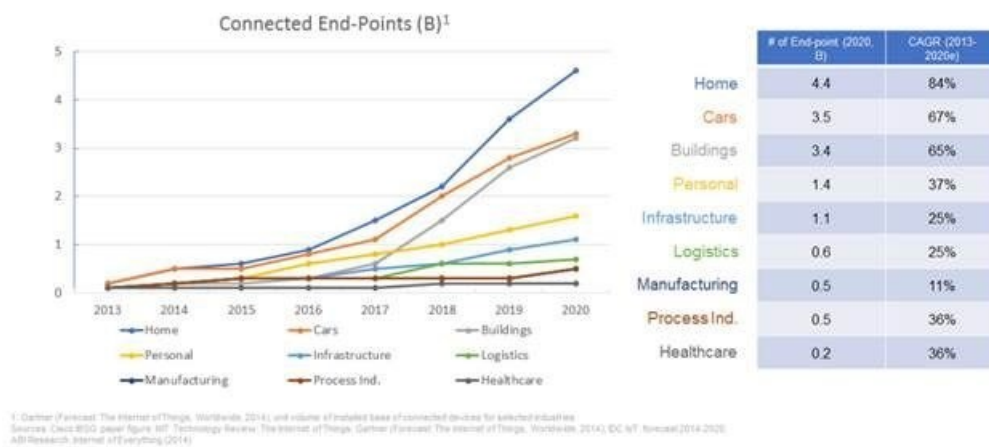
Smart building data makes business sense

By Neil Cameron

20 Feb 2018

Buildings have become so much more than brick, mortar and glass. They are smart business tools which assist organisations to achieve their business objectives. Today's buildings are essentially technology centres, embedded with complex networks of connected devices and systems. The constant flow of data that these devices (or end points) generate, typically through internet protocol (IP) interfaces, provide businesses with the information that enables seamless and efficient functionality.

Recent years have shown a tremendous surge in connected end points within buildings, foretelling an exponential rise in technology embedded in residential, commercial and institutional buildings. This represents the true, smart building. For businesses especially, the value can be highly advantageous.



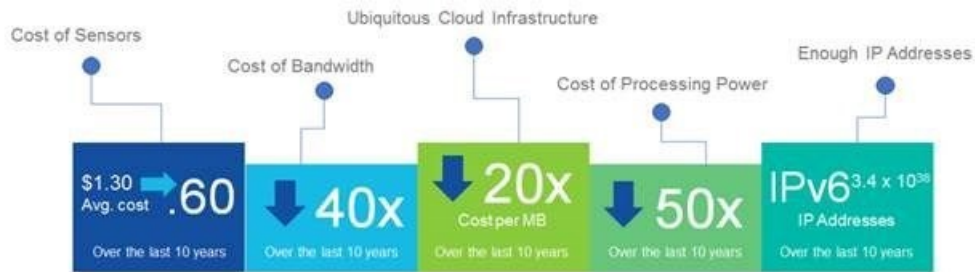
The value of connected, smart buildings

Most security and fire control devices, temperature management systems, lighting controls, energy management systems, audiovisual networks and more, are equipped with data-generating end points today. The increased capacity to interconnect multiple end points on a single, intricate network allows organisations to optimise incoming data and perform advanced analytics, giving building managers and owners heretofore unknown value.

Building owners can now track things such as energy consumption and temperature preferences in various building locations, giving them real insight into how to optimise these areas. Moreover, they are able to receive this data in a simplified, easily read format on any device of their choosing. The value of this is being realised as a necessity and no longer an unexpected perk of a particular system, creating an increasing demand for smart-enabled buildings.

Value vs. costs

Although the value of smart buildings is unparalleled, there are still concerns around the infrastructure costs to support such an ecosystem. Increased data calls for increased connectivity and bandwidth. While the image below highlights a reduction in costs to increase connectivity and enable smart buildings globally, South Africa is still known for its [high connectivity charges](#). However, data costs are on a slow but steady decline and, according to [this recent article](#), are set to drop even more in coming years.



Maximising the value

Organisations are starting to realise the potential of data to streamline their people, assets and resources for more efficient operations and improved productivity. Data generated by smart buildings offers insights which can solve a number of operational problems, while enhancing the environment of all who inhabit the space during working hours.

Energy and operational efficiency remain high concerns for building owners. Analysis of the data generated by connected end points highlights inefficiencies and money-draining problems, providing cost-saving benefits when these are addressed. The goal is to not only reduce building operational costs, but to maximise the value of these buildings, making them effective business tools for attaining objectives.

Smart buildings offer multiple benefits to different industries. Hospitals are able to better cater to patient needs when they have fewer redundancies. Airports are able to improve traveller experiences. Universities are able to streamline, leveraging student data to become more productive and drive down tuition costs.

The value, when properly leveraged and maximised, easily outweighs the cost and can provide for far higher gains than losses. Smart buildings make smart business sense.

ABOUT NEIL CAMERON

- Neil Cameron is Johnson Controls area general manager, building efficiency - Africa
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