

# The communications (r)evolution part 1: Drivers and trends shaping the future

The expression "The only constant in life is change" has never been more true. Across modern society, we are reinventing how we work and how we play - with technology forming the foundation of our lives. Spurred on largely by Millennials, the world is heading in the direction of a mobile, hyper-connected culture where proximity and access are no longer relevant.



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Eduard Du Plessis, managing director of EOH-NS, points out that the digital economy seems to have more in common with science fiction than reality – with video calls being used to diagnose and treat health issues – with doctors and patients sitting on different continents – and the use of smart sensors in objects to enable automated reporting in what is being referred to as the Internet of Things (IoT) or Internet of Everything (IoE).

“This is the tip of the iceberg, and the modern communications landscape will continue to change as new ways of working and new technologies enhance our ability to connect with each other. From the rotary phone to broadband and the IoE, the evolution of communications has accelerated at an exponential rate, and will continue to do so,” he says.

## Future of work

He points out that innovation and new technology are at the centre of the changing future of work. “Gone are the days where productivity was measured by hours in the office and where the office was a single physical location. Today’s work is about teams and projects; it’s about outcomes and deliverables. Today’s office is wherever the employee is. Our reality today is not the futuristic idea of robots and flying cars we dreamed of in the 80s, but instead the multi-purpose device we carry in our pockets – the smartphone. Mobility and connectivity are changing the world into a collaborative, social, always-connected environment.”

In light of this, corporate communications is having to evolve alongside society. With today’s workforce spanning generations and geographies, employees are not only demanding constant access to company systems, they require flexibility in order to perform.

## Connected Millennials

Du Plessis points out that by 2020, Millennials will make up the bulk of the global workforce, and that their attitudes and

values are impacting the future of work. “For Millennials, the concept of being office-bound and having to endure restrictions to applications is foreign and nothing short of frustrating. Life without mobile access to the tools they need, when they need them, is unimaginable. This attitude has crossed all the generations that are today’s workforce, and as people change their work styles to become more adaptable and mobile, companies are having to adapt to meet employees’ demands,” he explains.

“Millennials are curious, intuitive, always on the go and connected to each other. They have a culture that does not define work and play as separate things – in fact, they work while they play and they play while they work. Work for them is part of their lives and they’ve created these work communities with the same characteristics as today’s social communities. They care about their environment and each other. They care about sustainability. Mobility and connectivity are essential for their survival.”

## **Changing technology needs**

The result is that company networks need to be re-evaluated and, in some cases, completely redesigned. “Cloud has enabled the change in the way we work, but the end result is that companies need more bandwidth – and this need is just going to continue growing. As businesses continue to unify communications, using technologies such as instant messaging and web conferencing in the daily course of business, and as real-time communication and collaboration become more prevalent, bandwidth demands are just going to continue accelerating. In addition, security will become increasingly important as everything – and everyone – becomes constantly connected,” Du Plessis says.

He points out that in the future, the hyper-connected, mobile, globalised workforce will pick and choose where they work on the basis of what the company can offer them in terms of quality of life as well as technology. “Companies will be taking work to talent and talent will choose who they work for. Millennials favour companies that make sure they have the latest and best technologies in place, empowering them to work and play with ease.”

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