Beat: Technology

THE COVID EFFECT PART ONE: CRYSTAL BALL PREDICTIONS FROM GARTNER

2021 Technology Trends Part 1 of 3

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USPA NEWS - As the world starts to get to grips with the COVID-19 pandemic and a new United States President takes the reins of power, here are a few things to look out for in the technology world according to 'The Big Three' technology analyst firms. Today, we look at Gartner, the 400-pound gorilla of the analyst firms, reporting their predictions. This is part one of a three-part series that will cover Gartner, IDC and Forrester.

GARTNER FORECASTED TRENDS

Arguably the biggest name in the analyst firm world, Gartner, has published its "Top Strategic Technology Trends for 2021"[?]. Gartner VP, Brian Burke, introduces the predictions with a recognition that "Disruption is the hallmark of 2020. Although many leaders are used to some level of constant change, COVID-19 impacted the world in ways no one could have predicted. In turn, organizations have had to pivot and strategize, adapt and change in new ways"[?].

Burke goes on to highlight Gartner´s view that 2021 will follow three themes: People Centricity, Location Independence and Resilient Delivery.

First and foremost, Gartner recognizes that people still matter: "People are still at the center of all business ""” and they need digitalized processes to function in today´s environment"[?]. Secondly, "COVID-19 has shifted where employees, customers, suppliers and organizational ecosystems physically exist. Location independence requires a technology shift to support this new version of business"[?]. Thirdly, Gartner reminds us that we will always have challenges like pandemics or recessions, and I´d add even wars, which means the world will always be volatile in some way, shape or form.

Gartner looks at nine areas of technology trends and forecasts (see the link below for more information). Here I'll focus on three that I´ve chosen to report on, as the key trends essential to helping society drive through the pandemic in 2021.

INTERNET OF BEHAVIORS

Readers will know that I´ve written and reported on the Internet of Things, or IoT, in the past. Gartner introduces us to a new term "The Internet of Behaviors"[?]. Here Gartner are referring to the "˜digital dust´ of peoples lives. That´s the data and information that we create or form, coming from a range of sources as we leave more imprints in the digital world. Set to increase, Gartner points out that "the technology that puts all the data together and draws insight is growing increasingly sophisticated"[?]. Gartner uses the example of drivers and their insurance premiums. While drivers may not object to having speed, braking and cornering tracked in exchange for lower insurance premiums, they might not be as receptive to law enforcement also being able to track that information. Gartner suggests IoB must be of mutual benefit to both parties or risk being rejected by consumers. Since COVID-19 has increased societal use of "online-everything"[?], 2021 will see a huge expansion of IoB.

ANYWHERE OPERATIONS

Never more important is the idea of "anywhere operations"[?] which refers to an IT operating model designed to support customers everywhere, enable employees everywhere, and manage the deployment of business services across distributed infrastructure. Gartner talks about the five building blocks required to make this happen: collaboration and productivity; secure remote access; cloud and edge infrastructure; quantification of the digital experience; and automation to support remote operations. All of these technologies

exist today, but COVID-19 dramatically accelerated the development and adoption with even "˜laggard´ organizations forced to embrace them. Expect this trend to accelerate in 2021.

HYPERAUTOMATION

My last focus is Gartner´s view on a ""¦process in which businesses automate as many business and IT processes as possible using tools like AI, machine learning, event-driven software, robotic process automation, and other types of decision process and task automation tools"[?]. Gartner suggests that "in a world where digital acceleration is the name of the game, business leaders are clamoring for digital operational excellence. This was further accelerated by COVID-19, which rapidly pushed organizations to allow more remote, digital-first options. Hyperautomation is the key to both digital operational excellence and operational resiliency for organizations". Gartner goes on to talk about the need to digitize as much as possible, including documents and artifacts, and "¦"[?]to automate tasks, processes and orchestrate automation across functional areas."[?]

Conclusions

Like the other trends Gartner discusses (total experience; privacy-enhancing computation; distributed cloud; cybersecurity mesh; intelligent composable business; and AI engineering), many of these trends have been bourgeoning for some time. COVID-19 just made them imperatives.

We have made strides in the use of the internet. The Internet of Behaviors seems real to me. The IoB presents "significant and pervasive social and ethical implications"[?], but think how many more people are forced to use the internet. More online shopping, more video meetings, more social media for consumers. People like your grandparents or your aunts or uncles, perhaps even your parents, probably never had a video call in their lives before. Now, with a little help, they embrace it. I already know from my research that the anywhere operations and the hyperautomation are likely to enable more productivity, more collaboration, more discovery, and I get that.

COVID is like a war. A war on the whole of humanity. It´s in times of war that some of the best technological advances are made. Accelerated vaccine development, enhanced technologies that make social distancing easier, and new ways in which to be entertained or get your next job, and more. I look forward to sharing with you the thoughts and predictions of other analysts in the coming days and weeks. Look out for my second technology analyst firm report in the next installment, CRYSTAL BALL FORECASTS FROM IDC, coming soon.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-18093/the-covid-effect-part-one-crystal-ball-predictions-from-gartner.html

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