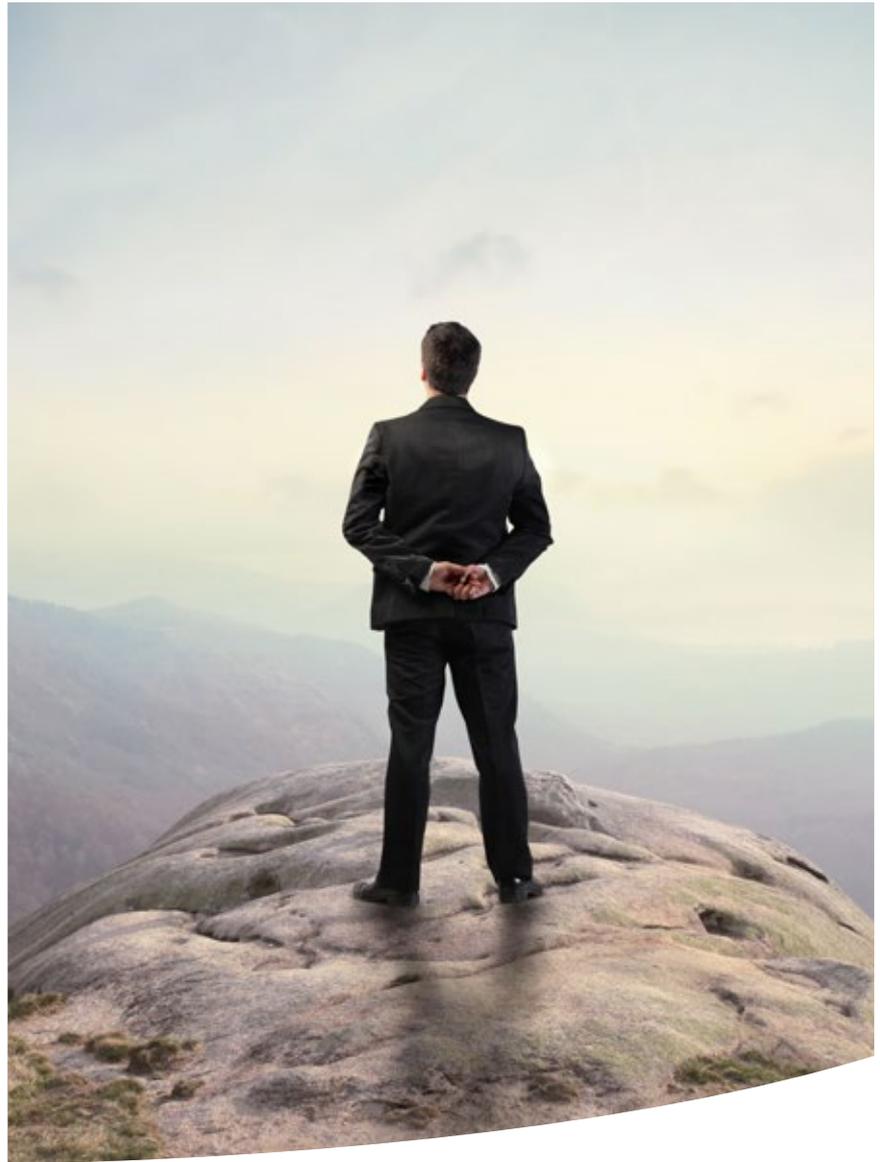


OPINION  
PIECE

# Beyond Digital



## Is your organisation ready to move 'beyond digital'?

Sopra Steria's Innovation Director Richard Potter outlines six key topics he believes will define our digital business world over the coming four to five years. He argues that putting in place the appropriate digital foundations now is the only way to succeed as the world of work moves beyond digital.

The world of work is changing at a frantic rate. In our increasingly digital world there are already close to 30 billion connected devices. They're tapping into and sharing data from the workplace, in our cars, at home and on the move via mobile devices and, increasingly, wearable technology. 'Digital' is everywhere but, as a term at least, it will soon fade into our standard business lexicon. As its currency diminishes, what will come next?

The number of connected devices is staggering and the continuing impact of digital on how and where we work will be huge. How should organisations prepare for the escalating digitisation of the workplace? And what will the future look like beyond digital, when our world of work takes digital for granted and must move onto the next step in its technological evolution?

### Scanning the horizon

In my role as Innovation Director at Sopra Steria, I maintain a watching brief on the digital horizon. This 'horizon scanning' isn't about some distant future that we can only imagine, but is grounded in the real world of today. It considers the signals we see today and anticipates what is likely to be in our workplaces in four to five years' time.

It assesses the potential new processes and ways of working that digital will make happen. And it makes us reflect on what basic digital assets are needed right now to ensure tomorrow's digital opportunity can be seized.

In scanning the digital horizon both for Sopra Steria and for our clients we have identified six topics that will define the world of work in the coming years. The labels we use may vary, but I believe that any organisation thinking about and planning for the future will find these topics forming part of that thinking [see panel].

## Six Topics Shaping a Future Beyond Digital

- 1. Digital automation: the displacement of work by automation** - more and more occupations will be automated or computerised. This will have ramifications on the human face of work that the modern enterprise must be prepared for.
- 2. Augmented human: the use of technology to enhance human capability** - people will be able to do things they couldn't do before. Doctors will work remotely in one clinic while checking on patients in another; field-based teams will be able to access customer history and corporate assets from anywhere.
- 3. My Data: personal data ownership** - this is a huge topic as we experience a shift in the balance of power regarding data ownership. As people's understanding of the value of their personal data grows and real-time social media streaming becomes the norm, organisations will need to re-think how they manage data and identify (and reward) those whose data is the most valuable. Personal data privacy regarding how that data is captured and used will be a hot topic.
- 4. Disintermediation: through peer-to-peer relationships** - new business and delivery models will emerge as digital channels remove agents (e.g. banks, universities), from transactional process, for example with online academic courses and crypto currency provision.
- 5. Securing the net: cyber security is paramount** - the relentless challenge of information security (infosec) in a networked world will see infosec being built into products and services from the outset, rather than as an add-on.
- 6. Hyper innovation: the speed of innovation in an open-source world** - to truly innovate you need to build the mechanisms that make it happen, such as open networks of intellectual property. Eco systems of knowledge, facilitated by social networks and cloud platforms, will be key enablers of innovation at speed.



## Signposts to the future

Sopra Steria's analysis of where the digital enterprise is now and what this means for today's employer and employee shows a rapidly changing workplace. For example, in our increasingly connected world, knowledge is being more openly shared. Companies seeking to gain competitive advantage from the information they gather can no longer do so by hoarding knowledge: commercial success will be increasingly derived from the speed at which companies harness knowledge, not simply hold on to it.

The role of the increasingly demanding consumer is another factor influencing the world of work. Digital customers have the highest expectations of the services and products they buy - and they want to consume them on their own terms. The workplace of today is meeting this need at many levels, but what's next? How will we be able to anticipate the needs of the customer of 2020?

Regulation too is a factor that we've taken into consideration in our analysis and it is clear that the regulators are struggling to keep pace with what digital means. Whether it's the unconstrained use of personal data or the flying of drones in public airspace, new products and services are stretching our existing regulatory frameworks and authorities are playing catch up. How do we ensure that those that provide oversight are able to do so? What can we do to help maintain openness and transparency in a society built on digital?

These are some of the 'signposts' to a world beyond digital that will be shaped by, among other things, the six topics outlined in this paper. Crucially, while these six topics will take today's enterprise to a world beyond digital in just a few years, we must remember that it will be a world that is 'built on digital' too.

## Fundamental building blocks

To seize the opportunities outlined in these six topics the essential digital building blocks must already be in place. Can your workforce and other stakeholders use social media and other digital means to collaborate easily? Are your employees able to work securely from anywhere via mobile and cloud technology? Do you have the facility to extract value from your data with analytics? All of these are the digital building blocks that will take tomorrow's workplace beyond digital as it embraces the Internet of Things.

This digital journey is both technological and ideological. That's why at Sopra Steria we are exploring the ramifications for our clients at a cultural level as well as from an IT perspective. Our London-based DigiLab showcases and assesses current and emerging technology enablers and asks what their impact is likely to be on tomorrow's workplace. As automation and artificial intelligence reduces the need for certain jobs, how and where will people work and what will they be doing? We are exercised by these and other questions as the world of work transitions beyond digital.

## Explore your digital horizon

The Sopra Steria DigiLab at our head office in Holborn, London is a great place from which to scan your own digital horizon. We can assess how far along the digital road your organisation has travelled to date? Together we can look at the fundamental building blocks you've already put in place and what more you need to do to prepare for the challenges and opportunities on your digital horizon.

To find out more or arrange a visit to our DigiLab email [info.uk@soprasteria.com](mailto:info.uk@soprasteria.com)

## About Sopra Steria

Sopra Steria, European leader in digital transformation, provides one of the most comprehensive portfolios of end to end service offerings in the market: Consulting, Systems Integration, Software Development and Business Process Services. Sopra Steria is trusted by leading private and public organisations to deliver successful transformation programmes that address their most complex and critical business challenges. Combining high quality and performance services, added-value and innovation, Sopra Steria enables its clients to make the best use of information technology.



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