

Tech that will shape the business landscape in 2019

 By [Ronald Ravel](#)

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The past few years have seen the technology landscape alter tremendously, with both consumers and professionals benefitting from continued innovation in the areas of cloud, IoT, networking and virtual and augmented reality - to name but a few.



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However, it is arguable that the implementation and subsequent impact of many of these technologies has been gradual rather than explosive, with change coming at a steady and consistent pace. This is most evident within the business world, where barriers including budget and existing legacy systems are prevalent.

In business, digital transformation is frequently disrupted by such obstacles, but thanks to the widespread acceptance of technologies such as cloud computing – for which EMEA organisations lead the way with an 84% adoption rate – they are now being overcome.

As a result, the way has been paved for 2019 to be a year of significant and rapid evolution, with the emergence of a raft of complementary technologies, all of which can shape the way we work for years to come.

Is 5G on the horizon?

While 4G currently plays a crucial role in business mobility, the possible arrival of 5G will take this to a new level beyond traditional office employees working on the move or remotely. With greater speed and, more importantly, capacity, than its predecessor, 5G will enable organisations to truly take advantage of IoT solutions, which are forecast by Ericsson to number 18 billion by 2022 – 70 per cent of which will use cellular technology.



5G estimated to reach 1.5 billion subscriptions in 2024

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Securing data with edge computing

With 5G driving IoT adoption, so too will this facilitate the emergence of solutions such as mobile edge computing as companies strive to manage the data efficiency and security issues generated by these devices. Data security remains a concern for organisations, with 62 per cent of Europe's IT decision makers citing it as a key investment priority for the next twelve months. In an age of relentless and unprecedented cyber-crime, managing an increasingly mobile IT infrastructure with an ever-growing number of touchpoints is understandably a challenge.



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SonicWall reports a 275% increase in encrypted threats, and a 229% rise in ransomware attacks, with IoT cited as a new battleground in the security firm's 2018 Cyber Threat Report.

Mobile edge computing solutions not only aid perimeter security, but also help to create a more efficient and productive mobile workforce by processing data at the edge of the network, reducing data garbage and any wider strain on cloud services. Such solutions also act as the gateway to bringing IoT devices into enterprise usage – once again demonstrating the alignment between these two emerging areas.



Edge computing will come of age in 2019

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2018 has already seen the emergence of business-targeted IoT solutions such as Toshiba's dynaEdge AR smart glasses, but the tri-factor impact of 5G, IoT and edge computing will undoubtedly push further advancements in this area, resulting in new devices coming to the fore next year across a variety of sectors, from engineering and manufacturing to utilities and healthcare.

Industry 4.0 leading the way

In fact, it is industry 4.0 which may first feel the advantages of this emerging set of technologies, particularly given its reliance on field and frontline workers who can benefit from these solutions.

Take for example the warehousing and logistics sector. Smart glasses can enable the hands-free scanning of barcodes within a warehouse so staff can "pick-by-vision", whereby visual cues for order fulfilment are projected into the user's field of view.

This delivers a range of benefits to enhance the process, which include indicating the optimum line of movement within the facility, dynamically signposting alternative components to pick if out of stock, or automatically scanning item or shipment barcodes to better manage the inventory.

At the same time, such industries may also be the first to drive transformation through blockchain automation, freeing up workers from certain manual tasks so labour can be better used elsewhere. With Gartner predicting that blockchain will create \$3.1 trillion in business value by 2030, organisations need to start thinking about how to maximise the technology sooner rather than later.

2019 promises to be an exciting year for IT leaders, with the arrival of an array of technologies which have the potential to disrupt the ways in which we work. Security must remain the key consideration, but if handled correctly the arrival of 5G will not only enable existing solutions to perform at an enhanced level, but also spark the mainstream appearance of IoT and edge computing solutions.

According to Toshiba, 43% of IT decision makers are prioritising the more innovative use of digital tools in order to make their workforce more productive, and there has never been a stronger environment for new solutions in this mould to come to market than in the coming year.

ABOUT RONALD RAVEL

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