

2020 Digital World Predictions

By Deborah M. Collier



2020 Ignites a decade focused on humanity, supported by ethically moderated technology, information and education.

Deborah Collier, President Chief Information & Marketing Officer at Global Digital Skills Authority - The Certificate in Online Business, investigates and delivers her predictions and advice for digital business in 2020.

A one year break from a decade of my annual 'E-Business Predictions', the landscape has changed, and a new decade starts with my '**2020 Digital World Predictions**', Let's explore the challenges and opportunities in my predictions for 2020 and beyond, and consider how they might affect you:

1) **Streaming Entertainment Takes Centre-Stage**

In the final edition of my annual 'E-Business Predictions', I proposed '*Subscription Services Joining Forces*', and advised streaming platforms to offer a single sign-on facility for customers among subscription service partnerships. This year, with the exponential growth in subscribers and content demand, the economic climate is highly favourable to media platforms providing video, music, media and TV on-demand to entertain and educate consumers, who are spending away from more costly purchases. Music streaming platforms such as Spotify (with 113-million subscribers and 248-million users in 79 markets), are now rivalled by competitors such as Boomplay (with 44-million subscribers and 217-million active users), and promise to dominate the African market. It's no secret that giants like Netflix, Disney and Amazon have moved into and booked out significant studio space in the UK, where there are attractive tax incentives for British investment in production. Growth trends and consumption for online media are at a rate of around 25% across the board. Content quality, sales and delivery to consumers in an ever competing market, should be at the heart strategy for media organisations in 2020 and beyond. This significant growth may trigger further regulation around the globe from government and industry bodies. This significant growth may trigger further regulation around the globe from government and industry bodies.

2) Collaborative Decision-Making Enables Democracy



Social and business networks are powerful for collaborative decision-making. Individuals can post, comment and deliver opinion on any subject, unless they are censored. The balance between freedom of speech and the posting of illegal and unethical content has been high on the agenda for the last two years. Both humanity and tech giants are evolving, however, have we evolved significantly enough to enable citizen voting or to enable greater support for government decision-making? Referendums can be both helpful and dangerous when coupled with misinformation, propaganda, bias and unethical objectives. In the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, there have been continued accusations about interference from outside nations, political and industry groups implementing strategies to target individual groups, advertise and manipulate conversations with inaccurate data. In 2020 and beyond, governments will continue to monitor, and assess the viability of citizen voting, and its interplay with the general public through social media? There will be an evolution in culture, technology and process.

3) Digital Ethics – Balancing Innovation with Humanity

Digital ethics is coming of age. The rise in social media conversation, user-generated content and use of mobile devices, coupled with our growing interaction with digital and artificial intelligence, means that as individuals we are creating an extension of ourselves and a 'digital identity'. As we become more 'digitally human', protection and privacy of our digital selves is becoming ever-more critical. As digital business and automation continue to grow, with more tasks are occupied by Artificial Intelligence, the question of ethics regarding innovation versus both employment and human behaviour, come to the forefront. However, digital business frees up individuals to perform more managerial, creative and innovation roles. In 2020 and beyond, I predict a significant shift in employment and skills needs. Both organisations and individuals must ensure that they have the right skills, education, experience, culture and environment to fulfil these changing needs. Environment and the planet is also of growing importance to humanity, and as such, while automation and digital reduce paper usage and deforestation, electricity production and energy sources to run technology and server farms, should continue to come from 'green' power production such as solar and wind power.

4) Tech Giants at Heart of Conscious Capitalism

Founders of tech giants are investing large proportions of their earnings in philanthropic initiatives. Their organisations are also aligning themselves more and more with humanity's needs and are both innovating and partnering with innovators to help the world. In the East, for example, e-commerce marketplace Alibaba's co-founder Jack Ma has already donated over £300-million to his charitable trust. In the West, Google's partnership with 'Deep Mind' which develops Artificial Intelligence, for healthcare advancement, is one very positive example of tech giants diversifying their portfolio of technological advancements to help humanity. Investment in these areas, is both ethically and revenue driven. Financially, investing in other scientific and technological innovations, as well as AI, addresses the challenges of gaining advertising revenue alongside supporting technology, supporting commerce, facilitating delivery of information and enabling both conversation and collaboration. Technologists at their core, are motivated by solving problems, and it makes perfect sense, that solving world problems forms part of the make-up and evolution of both the founders and their organisations.

5) Organisations Prioritize Stability

A roller-coaster of economic instability during the last decade, as well as the recent and evolving political turmoil, and uncertainty about the near future, take prominent place in the minds of leaders and organisations. Sensible organisations will balance identifying and managing risks in an ever changing environment, with innovating and gaining the competitive edge. Their strategies will include handling of cross-border trade, the impact of growing nationalism in many areas of the world, changing taxation and law, as well as international skilling. 'Brexit', and trade agreements around the world, as well with the UK and the EU, are causing the greatest headaches to organisational leaders.

This new decade promises some fabulous opportunities for entrepreneurs, organisations and the human-race. There will be more focus on benefiting humanity, through technological and societal progress. 2020 is the year those individuals in their 40's imagined as the 'Future', and Sci-Fi writers of their youth, predicted many of the innovations we have today. Progress through innovation and responding cultural shift, will move like a super-highway in and 2020 and beyond, and we should expect exciting times ahead.

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Deborah is the founder of the Certificate in Online Business™ (COB) series of globally-recognized industry qualifications, which were established in 2008. Listed in Richtopia's *'Top 100 Most Influential Chief Marketing Officers in the World'*, She developed the reputation of the programs among well-known brands gaining testimonials from Directors and managers at government organizations and leading companies such as Mars, Schneider Electric, House of Fraser and Procter & Gamble. She leads the strategic direction of the training programs and company, and oversees marketing, partnerships and licensing. She also serves on boards as a Non-Executive Director and is an Executive Producer for Film & TV.



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