Hyperconnectivity

Billions of people now live their days primarily online. No matter whether you're in Africa or Europe, New York or Shenzhen, you can buy a relatively cheap internet-enabled device and join a global online community. As the race between Facebook, Google and OneWeb to offer WiFi globally heats up, the rate of people plugging into what Forum For the Future terms the 'Onlife', will only increase. This hyperconnectivity is already having far-reaching effects across society and the economy, transforming everything from dating and elections to retail business models and education. Anyone with web access now has the majority of humanity's collective knowledge just a tap away at minimal cost. Across emerging economies these resources have proven to be a pivotal tool for reducing global poverty and spreading access to education. From just 5% of the global population in 2000 to 56% by 2019, the world is getting more connected. By 2019 the Arab States and the Pacific had approximately 65% internet penetration, Asia at 51% and Africa around 35% (despite now showing the fastest growth).

They can also connect with like-minded people regardless of their location or background and create change in ways that were impossible even a decade ago. However, this shift toward a hyperconnected world also creates new challenges in terms of internet governance, transparency and privacy. The Onlife could also have significant unintended consequences for individuals' mental health and societies' social fabric

As more objects with embedded sensors and internet connectivity are assimilated into society, creating the 'Internet of Things', further opportunities and challenges for individuals, communities and business will also begin to emerge. The number of everyday objects with internet connectivity, from dolls to fridges to glasses, has exploded along with the increasing value of the data they produce. In 2019 there are more than 25 billion connected devices and that number is expected to triple in just the next 5 years.

Implications

Hyperconnectivity and the increasing ubiquity of data it engenders are arguably the greatest source of disruption and innovation in the global economy, and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. Companies spanning a variety of sectors are already assessing how these developments will affect their underlying business models.

The influence of the internet means the distributed network is now one of the dominant organising structures in both the virtual and physical world. Distributed business models are shaking up everything from manufacturing to music.

The Onlife also has significant cognitive effects, especially for the younger generations who have now grown up saturated with technology through critical development periods. Despite not yet being able to study the repercussions over the long-term, studies already show decline in analytical skills, empathy, memory and critical thinking while simultaneously seeing increases in anxiety and stress.

Society groups such as Avaaz and 38 Degrees. The Arab Spring was built on the back of networking principles, amplifying the power of the collective. Today advocacy and activist organizations from Avaaz to 38 Degrees to the Extinction Rebellion are similarly built off mass mobilization through online communities.

Hyperconnectivity is driving many other trends we see shaping the world of tomorrow. First and foremost it is transforming civil society through social media and making radical transparency possible, thereby changing the relationship between citizens and government, as well as consumers and business. In both cases power is shifting from large institutions to smaller organisations and citizens.

Urgent Questions:

How will cognition of the younger generations be affected by the Onlife?

How will community and relationships be redefined in the digital age?

In what new ways will the Onlife empower the collective and the individual?

How do business models built on attention and data change the relationship between companies and consumers?

Current trajectory

In April of 2019, three different private retail companies all reached a [billion dollar evaluation](#) due to their new digital approach. They each sell nearly all their product online and utilize brick and mortar stores as psychical advertising, designing the locations for shareable moments and the "instagramification of retail".

OneWeb secured funding in 2019 to create a global high-speed broadband network, made of a constellation of [650 satellites](#). Their goal is to provide internet access to everyone on the planet, plugging in the four billion people currently disconnected.

China has implemented a [social scoring system](#) for each of its citizens, including a range of consequences if their score drops too low. Sanctions can restrict citizens from leaving the country and buying goods and can require community service or charitable donations as repercussions. The CCP says it hopes the program builds "sincerity" and a "harmonious socialist society".

China has also [built an application](#) for WeChat that allows you to know if someone nearby you is in debt. This highlights how digital technology could put even our most personal data in the public sphere.

After false information from WhatsApp triggered a series of lynchings last year in India, the media company was under pressure to get control of their disinformation problem before the world's largest democratic election begun. This technology has become a lynchpoint for political discourse expressing our values. In attempt to quell the problem they created a "Tipline" to collect, verify and study disinformation from the public.

Stats

The number of internet users worldwide in 2019 is 4.4 billion, up 9.1% from last year.

As of 2018, there is [3.5 billion](#) social media users globally which is a 9% increase from last year.

Mobile phone users in 2019 reached a total of [5.1 billion](#)

Africa's mobile [phone penetration](#) has grown from 1% in 2000 to 80% in 2017.

There has been massive growth in [mobile payments](#), especially in Asia where most countries have 40% mobile payment penetration and staggering rates of growth (such as Vietnam with a 24% growth rate). Countries such as China are nearly cashless societies with 86% of payments coming from mobile.

Growth is expected in education and e-learning as it becomes more readily available; from personalized learning to corporate MOOCs to remote online classes and universities.

Machine to machine (M2M) connections are expected to [increase threefold](#) from 2.3 billion in 2013 to 7.3 billion by 2018, by which point there will be nearly one M2M connection for every person on Earth. Applications for M2M connections include video surveillance, smart meters, smart cars, asset and package tracking, chipped pets and livestock, and digital health monitors.

In [June of 2018](#) there was 48,217,247 articles, 190,457,243 pages on overall (all languages) and 5,869,796 in english.