

White Paper: Digital Transformation

Revolution not Evolution?

As we discussed in our [Blog](#), a lot is made of the word “digital” in business circles at the moment – particularly strategists like [Gartner](#) and management consultancy firms like [Deloitte](#) who seem to view “being digital” as a life or death *modus operandi*.

Sales talk aside, it’s never been easier to innovate and develop in the technology world, and how your organization chooses to engage with an ever changing digital world is often closely linked to how successful it may become. In this paper, we discuss some factors you may want to consider when setting out a strategy on how you might choose to engage – or otherwise – with emerging technology

The status quo

We have found that the charities, social change organizations and NGOs we work with always tend to contain one or two people who want to be constantly evolving, innovating, trying out new applications and ways of communicating; challenging the norm.

You could call these people “digital disruptors”, and success can often result from embracing these types, fostering their passion and allowing them time to play.

For example, recently we helped set up a trial of a cloud based version of Raisers’ Edge, a fundraising [CRM](#). The application was the same, but moving to a cloud version meant their team could be based out in the field more, which led to them asking about remote access to other parts of the network, and general remote working. Roll on 6 months and they are now looking at downsizing their office space to save on operational cost, as they have a more flexible working environment. A small request to have a play with a new app led to an organizational level shift.

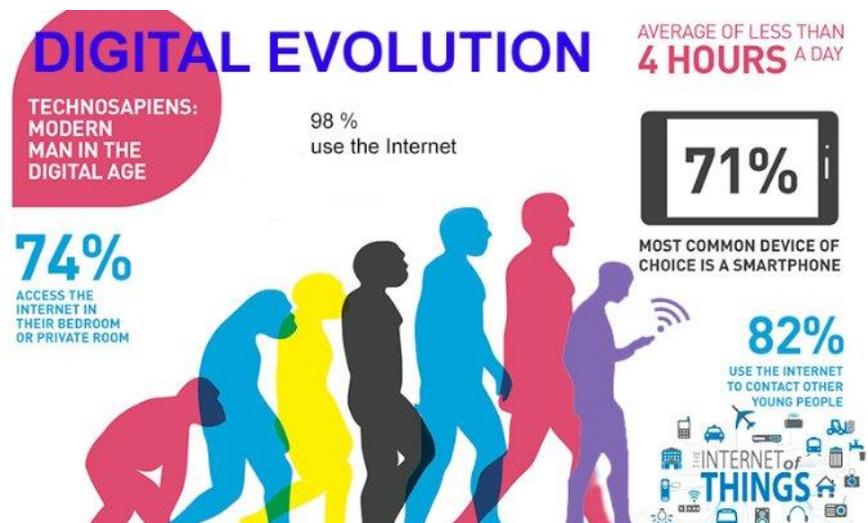
Waves of Digital Disruption



Transform vs. Evolve

Digital transformation is not to be confused with evolution. Transformation tends to happen when things get bad and a change is needed – a big change.

A lot of retailers have had to spend millions re-launching their websites when mobile took over from PC as the main channel for shopping. Trends like this are impossible to predict, but the platform you choose to embed your technology on can be open, flexible and forward thinking, or closed and restrictive - a cornerstone benefit of any cloud migration is a more flexible system

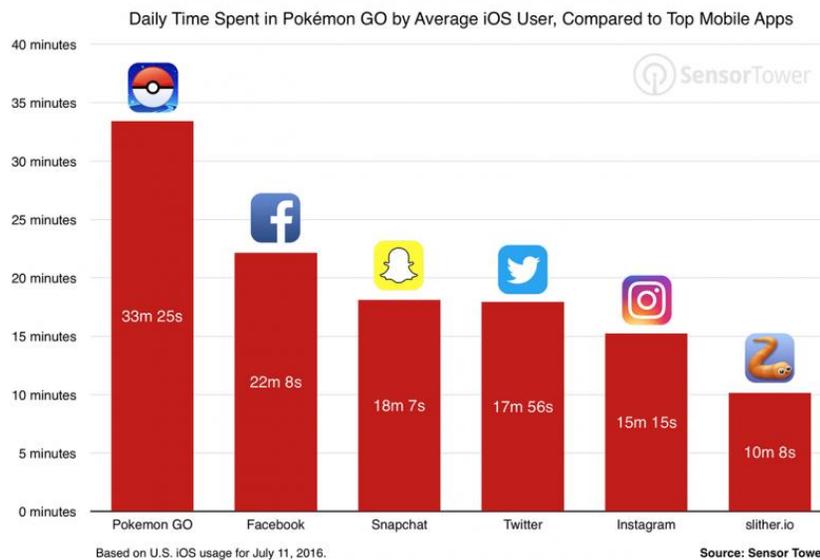


How did it come to this?

Change drives transformation of course, and this might come in the form of any or all of the following triggers (if possible, have a draft response plan for each as part of your IT Strategy):

1. Expectations - people *expect* to be able to contact you digitally, via an app, online chat, Facebook, Twitter, some companies are even snap chatting now! Would your stakeholders appreciate you being accessible via these routes or would you be seen as a “dinosaur” without them?
2. Technology: platforms like Office 365 offer so much value, particularly to charities where it is often completely free to store all their emails and shared files in the cloud forever, that you would not be acting responsibly to your stakeholders if you did not engage in a transformation?
3. Competition: other organizations change their service delivery model and put you at a disadvantage unless you come into line. Legislation can also be a factor here as new technologies such as encryption become not only the norm but the minimum acceptable standard e.g. [GDPR](#) which affects us all!

4. Disruptors: this can be a mix of all the above, that combine them to change the landscape forever. Who'd have thought that a children's' game would end up outstripping social media platforms as the no.1 most used app on IOS?!



Agility

Nowadays, the practice of “Bring Your Own Device” ([BYOD](#)) – allowing staff to use their own tech for work - is well established and accepted as long as they are secured. Implementing a BYOD policy is not large scale digital transformation, but it may open doors to innovation that you had not conceived as possible previously.

Likewise, the rise of [Shadow IT](#) – people having their own little IT setup hidden from management but there to help them work smarter – is an indicator of how willing people are to innovate and embrace digital technology.

Agility is the key to harnessing this potential power. Yes, ring fence core assets or sensitive information, but then allow your staff more control over their devices so they can play around with Skype or use WhatsApp to chat within their teams or install Tweet Deck without the need for approvals and IT Helpdesks – let them get on with it in their own sandbox; trust us when we say that it is completely possible to have a flexible setup that fosters innovation whilst protecting the crown jewels, especially with Cloud Computing underpinning it all.

Death by Digital Transformation!

Creating space for research, innovation and experimentation within your organization will foster a culture that engages with digital trends from the ground up. A complete Digital Transformation Programme will be expensive and pretty stressful. Far better to engage with your IT team and set up a sandbox to nurture new ways to engage your customers, stakeholders and staff.

We have talked a lot about IT Strategy recently and even written a 5 step guide on our [Knowledgebase](#) – and making space for digital on that strategy will go a long way to staying current, creative and ahead of the pack; the age old mantra of “IT being an enabler” could never ring truer than it does in 2017.



Further Reading

Questions to ask to get your Digital Transformation right - <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/nine-questions-to-help-you-get-your-digital-transformation-right>

Dealing with Digital Disruption - <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/nine-questions-to-help-you-get-your-digital-transformation-right>

Step by Step guide to Digital Transformation - <http://www.slideshare.net/niallmckeown/digital-transformation-45738266>

Would you like to discuss any of this further?

At Ethical IT we are [here to help](#) Ask us about this subject or indeed any other current trends like [Office 365](#), [Charity Donation Schemes](#), [Remote Working](#), [Backups](#) and more – we’re all ears. Our Twitter feed also contains regular tips and tricks about these sorts of things, so please follow us [@ethicalituk](#).