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5 game-changing IT trends of the near future

Education

by Joe Stangarone

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Summary: As technology evolves at breakneck speed, agility becomes critical. An organization's ability to adapt to changing trends becomes necessary for survival. In this article, we explore the next major IT trends to watch for, and explain why they're so important.

Here's a shocking statistic I've previously shared, but bears repeating: I know that **70% of the companies** listed on the Fortune 1,000 list just ten years ago have now vanished? It's an inability to adapt to change. These previously strong companies fell because they couldn't (or wouldn't) alter their course. They didn't adapt. How what? In another 10 years, I'm sure we'll see the same thing. As technology changes, we're seeing a shift in the business world. These days, agility is king—yet many companies will struggle to keep up.

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About the author



Joe Stangarone is a 30+ year veteran of the IT industry and president of mrc—the software company behind the award winning development platform, **m-Power**. Joe shares his leadership and technology insights through the Cup of Joe Blog,

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in struggle to keep up.

Game-changing trends sprout up at an ever-increasing rate, business success is all about our ability to adapt. How quickly can you capitalize on new technology trends? The first to jump on these major trends early will hold a competitive advantage over those who can't.

What game-changing trends should you prepare for in the near future? While the list could be much longer, here are 5 such trends to expect:

The rise of the data-driven business

As companies continue to move to the cloud and the internet expands beyond desktop PCs and into mobile devices, field equipment, cars, and more, businesses have more data than ever before. As a result, we see a growing push towards data-driven businesses.

What is a data-driven business? This goes beyond the traditional weekly reports and status meetings, and into the realm of real-time data at your fingertips. It requires that businesses set up tools and methods to process incredible amounts of data quickly. Those organizations who adopt this data-driven approach will increasingly separate themselves from their competitors.



According to this [article](#) published by McKinsey & Company, “Big data and analytics have climbed to the top of the corporate agenda. Together, they promise to transform the way companies do business, delivering the kind of performance gains last seen in the 1990s, when organizations redesigned their core processes. And as data-driven strategies take hold, they will become an increasingly important point of competitive differentiation.”

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The problem: While this is a growing trend, enterprise data is still largely under-utilized. Data silos exist across many businesses, limiting the value that organizations can draw out of their data. If they are to create a data-driven business, company leaders must start viewing their data for what it is: a strategic advantage.

2. The rise of the ‘multi-cloud’

With cloud computing, we already have public clouds, private clouds, and hybrid clouds. As businesses move to the cloud, we’re seeing a push towards a ‘multi-cloud’ approach—where organizations opt for a combination of cloud services.



For instance, an organization may host some applications on the public cloud, while keeping others on a private cloud. They may replace other applications altogether with SaaS options. These multiple options let companies pick and choose the best approach for different applications and services.

However, while this multi-cloud landscape delivers new possibilities, it also opens up new challenges. How will organizations manage information spread across multiple clouds? How will they manage multiple data sources and keep everything in sync? As businesses shift their data and applications across multiple clouds, they must also address the issue of integrating that data across different sources.

3. The rise of software-defined networking (SDN)

As computer technology and software advances, networking technology has remained relatively stagnant. Businesses are stuck managing modern computing and storage needs on 20-year old networks, and they’ve hit a wall. However, that’s all changing—thanks to the rise of software-defined networking (SDN).

“In my opinion, SDN will make IT the most exciting place to be in an

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organization,” says Karthikeyan Subramaniam is Chief Software Architect at **ADARA Networks**. “What will the impact of SDN look like? To get an idea, we can look at how the smartphone transformed the world-for consumers and businesses and also for IT. By decoupling software from hardware, iPhone and Android phones opened up the possibility of an entire ecosystem of apps. An entire community of developers, users and businesses sprung up and turned a mundane device, the phone, into something very exciting.

What does this have to do with SDN? By decoupling the OS from hardware and leveraging new programming languages, SDN gives IT the tools they need to be able to develop their own creative ways to solve real business problems and be part of an ecosystem of creative IT people.”

4. Security moves outside of the company walls

As consumer devices and applications work their way into the enterprise, we see a shift in security tactics. As the lines between personal and business usage blur, more employees expect access to business data from anywhere, on any device. This requires a fundamental shift in security tactics.

“The cloud has introduced new application consumption options for traditional applications like salesforce automation and customer relationship management,” says Brian Babineau, VP of Product and Channel Marketing at **Barracuda**. “Mobile apps like Dropbox and Evernote, have altered the way information is created and stored. With applications like these gaining popularity, usage and data is blurred across personal and work accounts, which also



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raises the question of securing the cloud.”

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“Data protection needs are quickly becoming protection and access requirements. Customers aren’t just asking for backup, they want to be able to access their files quickly and available across multiple devices in the event of a disaster. Doing this means customers will leverage data protection solutions that use the cloud for complete availability and accessibility.”

5. The software purchasing process changes

In the past, enterprise software purchases were expensive, risky, and required months for rollout and training. We’re seeing a new trend emerge—as employees opt for cheap (or free) cloud services, and upgrade as needed. As explained below, this trend is driven by the rise of simple, accessible software combined with a younger generation entering the workforce.

“In the short to mid-term, I’m anticipating a major shift in the enterprise market, which will see rapid growth in previously free, cloud-based services,” explains Evan McCutchen, Chief Information Officer at **TechnologyAdvice**. “I’m not simply talking about popular cloud storage services like Box.com or even Salesforce, but instead services that replace traditional software as we know it. Generation “now” is predisposed to simply solving problems through the use of free tools they discover through search engines. We’re seeing this in our smaller organization as we hire team members directly out of undergrad programs. Rather than using Microsoft PowerPoint, the traditional presentation tool in business, many are opting to use the cloud-based service Prezi. The same goes for project management, where Microsoft Project has been replaced with a hosted service that includes the same features for free. Upgraded features – those which are not generally available in traditional software without an add-in – can be purchased for a nominal fee near instantaneously.”

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“While I’m not suggesting the enterprise will select a free service for their needs, I feel that these services will become more prevalent in a subscription-based model. Per-user and per-use pricing is taking over and is, in many cases, more economical for the business, as well. This trend will continue to grow as generation “now” begins to climb the ranks in the corporate organization. These changes in product selection and payment plans signal a resounding shift in the way businesses buy software and will impact the bottom line of not only the corporate purchaser, but the software vendor, as well. The corporate purchaser does not have to buy expensive software that is outdated only months after the buy, and the software organization has the opportunity to book recurring revenue to help grow and add new features to the product.”

So, what do you think? Is there anything you would add to this list? If so, please share your thoughts in the comments.

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