Letter from the Editor

By: Scott St. John

In the April, 2nd 1965 issue of *Time* magazine titled *"The Computer in Society,"* author and economist Joseph Froomkin presupposed that, based upon the advent and adoption of the computer, *"*automation will eventually bring about a 20-hour work week." The article went on to surmise that that automation would lead to the creation of "a mass leisure class" which would then lead to several foreboding economic and social impacts, including two-percent employment and "non-functional lives," creating "a severe test of the deeply ingrained ethic that work is the good and necessary calling of man." And he wasn't wrong. Well, not entirely.

At least at the time, technology was anticipated to make life better. More leisure and less work—sign me up. Froomkin's predictions, however, which were projected to occur within 100 years, didn't take into account what would happen between the time of the article and the actual fruition of automation technology. As in, now.

Ten years prior to *Time*'s poignant position on the adoption of automation technology, the UK political analyst and historian Cyril Northcote Parkinson coined what is now known as Parkinson's Law. Had Froomkin and Parkinson been better acquainted, he may have also foreseen that work would simply assume the newly available time as a means to justify itself.

Today, 54 years after the publication of the *Time* article, there is rarely a day that I am able to have time to eat lunch or even tend to the most basic of biological functions. And in the time I find for either, I'm constantly connected, conducting calls over Skype, keeping up with social media, or checking news and email on my mobile device. I work 12-hour days, six days a week. I literally can't recall the last time I took a vacation. Leisure, for me, is the time I get between tucking the kids into bed and collapsing into my own. And, I'm not alone. It would seem that technology hasn't made life easier, but instead made it easier to work and for work to permeate virtually every aspect of life. Agile technology, however, may be about to change that.

Since the Industrial Revolution, we have seen automation technology improve and transform businesses and entire industries. From the introduction of Eli Whitney's Cotton Gin (1793), Heinz's electrical food factory (1901), Ford's assembly line (1913), the McDonald brothers' Speedee Service System (1948), or General Motor's introduction of industrial robotics for automobile manufacturing (1961) — automation has proven to pay dividends and, perhaps, rushed its adoption.

From the Industrial Revolution to the Digital Era, the focus of automation has been to disrupt and transform business. But it wasn't until 2008 that the State of Utah instituted a four-day work week (which is gaining momentum even today) for government workers, and 2010 when the New Economics Foundation asserted the wide-reaching social benefit of a 21-hour work week. Which really isn't all that bad when you consider we're just a little over halfway to Froomkin's future.

Over the next century, automation will continue to advance businesses and technology will continue to build the mass leisure class — just like it has for Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Apple's Steve Jobs, Microsoft's Bill Gates, Telsa's Elon Musk, and Uber's Garrett Camp. In the not-so-distant future, your refrigerator will directly interface with Amazon's AI

agent, which will locate your product and place your order, and it will be delivered the same day by drone. That's practically less than a decade away from being a reality. It's not hard to imagine that in 50 years, AI will be able to autonomously create and run businesses on its own. Even at *Pipeline* today, we are implementing robotics process automation and artificial intelligence technology to automatically create and distribute our content through our digital publishing platform, Pubspoke. But, I'm not really looking for mass leisure. I'm just hoping for a five-day, 40-hour work week and some semblance of normalcy.

In this issue of *Pipeline*, we look at how agility is unlocking potential across the industry. We take a special look at Intraway, and how it is helping its customers embrace transformation with automation. We hear from LightRiver, and see how factory-built networks are speeding new network implementations. ServerFarm takes us through the value of virtualizing data center assets, The Independent Data Center Alliance shows us how they are turning challenges into new opportunities, and CNI shows us how to bridge the physical and digital divide, and FNT Software shows us how to keep pace in a 5G world. We explore ways to articulate customer value with Evolving Systems and overcome the cultural generation gap with Dr. Mark Cummings. We also take a look back at the month's top news stories and much more.

We hope you enjoy this and every issue of *Pipeline*,

Scott St. John
Managing Editor
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