Letter from the Editor

By: Scott St. John

As 2019 draws to a close, I can't help but feel a little less than satisfied. But my expectations may have been a little overly optimistic.

2019 started off with a big bang, hurdling next generation technology out into the industry ethos. 5G, AI, IoT, and host of other trends had such great promise and their adoption had some real, tangible traction. So where are all the 5G phones, AI-driven networks, robotic workers and self-driving cars? We couldn't even get the hooverboard right.

Fact is we're not there yet, and that's okay. These things take time. The important thing is that we made real progress. Over 70 5G networks are estimated to be online by the end of the year spanning over 100 cities on multiple continents. Over 20 billion connected devices were brought online with estimates reaching nearly 40 billion by 2030. More recently and to the point, when I called my service provider regarding an outage, the issue had been resolved by the time a live person picked up the phone—twice. These small, iterative steps are as real as they are important.

The full weight and permutations of these next generation technologies has yet to be seen, but it will. In the years to come it will continue to morph into various use cases as business continue to evolve, innovate and transform—changing the way we communicate and the very fabric of our global, connected society.

In this issue of *Pipeline*, we explore key emerging trends from 2019 and look ahead to 2020. We hear from Sigma Systems on communications service provider (CSP) trends and Juniper Research on real-time communications trends. We take a look at the battle between AWS and Google for the public cloud market with Optiva, and hear from Pattern89 on the importance and initiatives related to the implementation of ethical AI. Noviflow tells us how software-defined networking is transforming the edge network and Radisys shows us how Open RAN is transforming mobile networks. WeDo tells us why network intelligence has to go beyond network performance, Transnexus discusses how technology can be applied to combat robocalling and restore telecom trust, and Glassbox explores how to address the top digital CX complaints. We also take a look back at the month's top news stories and more.

As always we hope you enjoy this and every issue of *Pipeline*, and we wish you a very happy and prosperous New Year.

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