Letter from the Editor - April 2024
Digital Transformation

By: Scott St. John, Pipeline

Digital Transformation, as a topic, seems somewhat old hat. In fact, we've been talking about it at *Pipeline* for nearly **10 years** now. So much so we've periodically contemplated killing it. The problem is, just when you think we have reached the end of the transformation road, something new comes along and changes the game. That's the thing with transformation, it tends to transform. Transformation is an evolutionary, and sometimes revolutionary topic. As long as it remains so, we'll keep covering it.

For instance, for a few years there was some smoke simmering around Big Data, analytics, machine learning, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Then there was an absolute explosion related to Generative AI (Gen AI) that changed the game entirely. Similarly, connectivity started off with broadband Quality of Service (QoS) and meeting the insatiable capacity demand for bandwidth. This was followed by the shift to mobile, evolution to 4G, revolution to 5G, then satellite integration, and now virtualization. We are even talking about building extraterrestrial networks for IoT and robotic use cases on the Moon.

Each of these innovations is transformative in its own right. But, the current state of transformation – which is a welcome sight – is how these transformative technologies are being combined to create entirely new innovations. Take Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) as an example. AR and VR were first introduced with a clunky headset only dared to be donned by uber gamers to reach the next-level gaming experience. Now, when combined with Gen AI, AR and VR are being combined to aid in Computer-Aided Design (CAD), 3D modeling, and manufacturing – and even by field technicians who can access technical documentation and field manuals on the fly. And this is just the beginning.

But hold on, tiger. Before you toss your keys to the next-best Large Language Model (LLM) and let an AI take over your company's operations, you need to understand that transformation isn't all rainbows and unicorns. It comes with real risks. For starters, AI can hallucinate – creating what seems like perfectly valid, but false outputs. Take it a step further, and Gen AI is being used to attack your company, its data, employees, and customers. All at a time when we have become critically dependent on a spider's web of connectivity and technology that – oh, by the way – must all be maintained, streamlined, and work seamlessly in concert with each other. These are just a few of the reasons this edition of *Pipeline* is so important.

In this issue of *Pipeline*, we explore the current state of digital transformation. Oracle discusses how CSPs are best positioned to enable fully autonomous industry innovation. Gridraster illustrates how immersive intelligence is being created by combining AR and VR with AI and generative AI. Nitel considers what enterprises should think about in digital transformation projects and how the network factors in. ServiceNow explores Generative AI's impact on telco transformation and *Pipeline*'s Dr. Mark Cummings raises red flags around Gen AI's risks in *The Dark Side of Generative AI*. Satcoms Innovation Group (SIG) delves into how the future of our globally-connected society requires virtual satellite connectivity. Optiva shares how cloud-based MVNOs are transforming the mobile landscape. Alianza tells us how telcos are shifting to the cloud to transform core communications, Opengear explains how enterprises are using SD-WAN and SASE to minimize network downtime, and Nokia gives us ways to unlock sustainability with fiber broadband. All this, plus the latest enterprise and communications technology news, and more.

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

Scott St. John
Managing Editor
Pipeline

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