



CONNECTING DIGITAL ECOSYSTEMS

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How does your current role complement your contribution to this advisory board?

I have written extensively on the topic of the emerging digital economy, the digital ecosystems that support this and the process of digital transformation that the industry is undergoing. My two most recent books, *Delivering the Digital Economy* and *Transforming the Telco* sit firmly in the center of scope of this advisory board.

How would you describe your approach to digital ecosystems and platform strategies?

I'm hugely interested in platform strategies and in particular how they can be applied to the telco and the wider telco/supplier relationship. Platform business models, in their current guise, are going to be difficult for the telco to operate for a variety of reasons. I'm particularly interested in how to design platform strategies that will work for the very particular circumstances of the global telco industry.

For those working on a platform strategy, what would your advice be: to become a platform enabler to help partners develop marketplaces or to develop their own marketplace?

Federated platform strategies, where multiple telcos cooperate to develop and deliver digital services on a global scale (rather than being limited to their own geography) offer a mechanism to allow the telco to participate in the platform revolution.

What role do APIs play in a digital ecosystem strategy?

To allow the telco to compete in the digital services world, the telco must evolve from a closed IT architecture to an open platform architecture – accessed by a large ecosystem through openly available APIs.

What are the key challenges to overcome in developing a digital ecosystem approach?

The challenges are multi-faceted – technical, cultural and process-centric. Widespread awareness and use of open APIs is certainly one of the technical building blocks. Additionally, evolving the cultural mindset of the industry to recognize that cooperation as part of a wide ecosystem is the future of the industry. Finally, the internal processes of the industry will need to fundamentally change to adapt to the fast-moving dynamics of a digital ecosystem driven industry.

How important are network virtualization, cloud technology and 5G to a digital ecosystem strategy?

Don't make the mistake of believing that 5G is in some way independent of successful digital transformation. The two are intimately linked. Telcos will be unable to reap the benefits that cloudification and 5G promises without effective digital transformation. Similarly, the new digital services and ecosystems that we hope to exploit will depend on the capabilities offered through cloudification and 5G.

In terms of the wider societal impact of digitization, what are you looking forward to over the next decade? What concerns you?

We are at the very start of digitization; the next decade is likely to see the utter disruption of the largest industries across the globe. The positive impacts will be on the environment and the scope and sophistication of services available to the global population. Unfortunately, a major negative impact will involve the destruction of many millions of traditional jobs in traditional industries. I am also worried about the impact of digitalization on personal privacy.

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