

# Maverick\* Research Examines Our Evolving Relationship With Technology

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Initiatives: [CIO Leadership of Innovation](#), [Disruptive Trends and Emerging Practices](#)

The digitalization of society is changing how people and technology relate and interact. This collection of Gartner research explores, from unorthodox angles, how people may become more machine-driven and machines more people-driven. (Maverick research exposes unconventional thinking and advice.)

## Overview

### Opportunities and Challenges

- Our future won't be human-centric. We will have to recognize that artificial intelligence (AI) participates in society, too. Moreover, human life itself will become much more "architected" — by 2040, most people will be augmented by technology.
- With more advanced AI and robots, we are effectively creating a new form of life. This means we need to evaluate what its meaning should be. And in the process, we might inch closer to an understanding of the purpose of our own lives.
- At the same time, we can learn from human physiology to improve the world of IT. The human body can be analyzed as 12 layers analogous to an innovative supply chain technology stack.
- Seamless interaction between users and interfaces will make it possible for organizations to reach customers wherever they are. CIOs must ensure their teams can respond quickly to the demands and desires of customers.

### What You Need to Know

- Agility isn't the answer to everything. For instance, data management is an area that doesn't respond well to an agile approach. It's time to end the "agile" hype.
- The impulse to use technology to keep track of workers must be kept in check to avoid lowering workplace morale by infringing privacy. Performance should be the key metric used to assess remote workers.

- Software will never be bug-free, and testing is not the best way to deal with bugs. IT departments need to move to “test less” and even “testless” approaches.

## Insight From the Experts

### Our Relationship With Technology Is Changing



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“People use technology.” That is how we have always defined our relationship to technology, with users being technology’s operators. Consequently, the question of who is responsible for the use of technology has been simple to answer: the user. But this is changing.

Take, for instance, a simple Google search. Are you, as a user, in total control of this action or “conversation”? No. Its results depend on many factors, such as the search history of others, your location and the involvement of advertisers. Your relationship with Google’s search engine isn’t so much “user as operator” as “user as interactor.”

And even this kind of interactive relationship with technology is evolving. Imagine a domestic robot that is busy cleaning your floor, only to find you standing in its way. It says “Excuse me!” and you take a step back. It says “Thank you” and you reply “You’re welcome!” There is no longer a user relationship — you interact with the robot as you would with any other being in that space.

This collection of Maverick\* research explores our changing relationship with technology, as well as various other topics, from unorthodox perspectives.

*Sincerely,*

*Frank Buytendijk and Jamie Popkin*

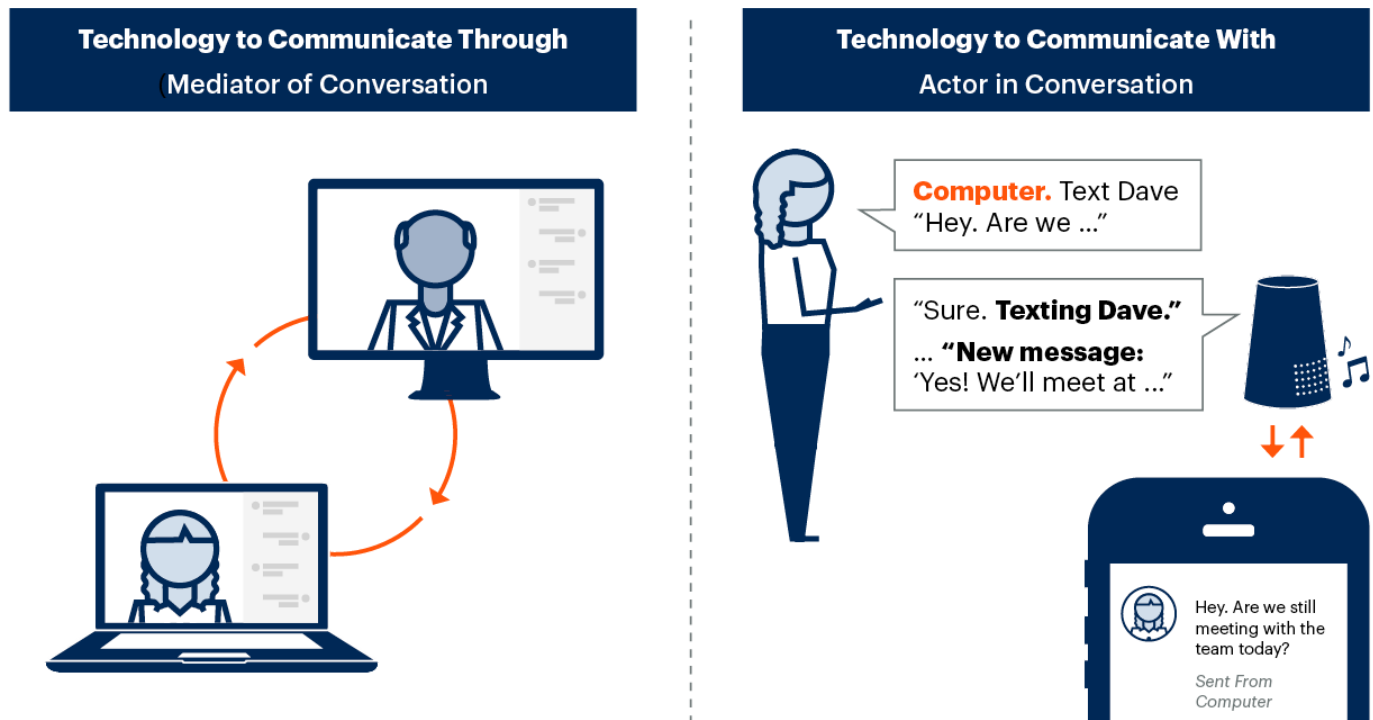
## Executive Overview

### Definition

We have long communicated *through* technology (see “[Digital Connectivism Tenet 4: We Do Not Differentiate Between People and Things](#)”). We still do. Think of a phone call, for example, or of how you’re reading these words on Gartner’s website. But we now also routinely communicate *with* technology itself. For example, virtual personal assistants like Amazon’s Alexa and Apple’s Siri participate in many of our conversations over dinner (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Communicating Through and With Technology

## Our Relationship With Technology



Source: Gartner

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Together, the Maverick\* publications in this collection offer an overview of ways in which our relationship with technology may change, and of how CIOs should prepare for those changes.

### \*Maverick Research

The "Maverick" research program is Gartner's incubator for unconventional, disruptive research and insights. Unconstrained by Gartner's typical process of consensus formation, analysts can take minority positions, introduce new topics, pioneer new research designs, and explore longer time horizons. These lines of research help you get ahead of the mainstream and take advantage of trends and insights that could impact your strategy and your organization (see Note 1).

## Research Highlights

Our Evolving Relationship With Technology Necessitates Preparation on Many Fronts

As our relationship with technology changes, we must account for how it will affect digital business. Not only must we learn new ways of relating to technology. We must also prepare for changes to all aspects of our lives. The following set of Maverick\* documents explores some ways in which the future may unfold.

### Related Research

[“Maverick\\* Research: Being Human 2040 — The Life of the Architected Human in a More-Than-Human World”](#): Our future won't be human-centric. We will have to recognize AIs as actors in society, too.

Moreover, human life itself will become much more “architected.” By 2040, the majority of human beings will be technology-augmented.

[“Maverick\\* Research: The Meaning of Life as a Set of Artificial Intelligence Design Principles”](#): This piece breaks new ground by arguing that AI can be considered a new form of life, one meaningful in its own way. This argument has surprisingly practical implications, once you consider the meaning of life as a set of design principles.

[“Maverick\\* Research: Learn the ‘Body Language’ of Supply Chain Technology”](#): Understanding the underlying characteristics of each functional layer of the human body and comparing them to technology capabilities can help supply chain technology leaders prioritize innovative technologies to implement in their organizations.

[“Maverick\\* Research: No-Touch Interfaces Will Transform Humanity Faster Than You Think”](#): Whenever humanity invents a new form of communication, society blossoms with new ideas, forms of community and industries. The coming decade will see the next quantum leap in communication and interconnectivity, entirely driven by no-touch interfaces. An ecosystem of new vendors, software applications, devices and marketplaces will evolve.

### Other Maverick\* Topics

The march of technology challenges organizations to change how they operate on many levels. Business leaders must balance the “need for speed” with responses to people's privacy and security concerns, while also ensuring that products meet the needs of users. At the same time, the changing nature of work and workforces poses new challenges. The following Maverick\* documents explore the effects of these changes and how CIOs can help their organizations cope with them. They will be joined in April 2020 by the two further Maverick\* documents mentioned in Note 2.

### Related Research

[“Maverick\\* Research: Software Testing and the Illusion of Exterminating Bugs”](#): This document challenges the assumption that, as organizations strive to improve application quality, they must invest more in testing. The authors propose a radically different, “test less” approach to application development, and ultimately a “testless” model focused on building AI-enabled, resilient and bug-resistant applications.

[“Maverick\\* Research: Building a Fluid, Configurable Workforce? You Need a Talent Loyalty Program”](#): Technology and automation are becoming more pervasive in the workplace, and in the process are shaping the future of work and the talent landscape. Leaders must rethink how they value people and their work across a range of employment models in order to achieve optimal business outcomes. This document explores an approach to deconstructing jobs and designing a talent-led, gamified reward system to incentivize strong loyalty, engagement and performance from a fluid, configurable workforce.

[“Maverick\\* Research: Stop Swinging the Agile Hammer at Things That Aren’t Nails”](#): This document constitutes a protest, an appeal to stop applying “agility” by default. Instead, we should think more carefully about how agility should (and should not) be applied to nonsoftware problems.

## Related Resources

### Webinars

[“Top 2020 Workplace Predictions”](#)

[“How AI Will Impact Jobs and Your Workforce”](#)

[“Dispelling AI Myths to Deliver Real Business Value”](#)

[“The Gartner Top Strategic Predictions for 2020 and Beyond”](#)

### Articles

[“Future-Proof Your Application Strategy”](#)

[“Gartner Predicts the Future of AI Technologies”](#)

[“Embrace Instability for the Digital World”](#)

[“3 Reasons Why VR and AR Are Slow to Take Off”](#)

[“Make Application Development Cool Again”](#)

## Note 1: Roots of the Word “Maverick”

Derived from the name of Texas rancher Samuel Maverick and his steadfast refusal to brand his cattle, “maverick” connotes someone who willfully takes an independent — and frequently disruptive or unorthodox — stand against prevailing modes of thought and action.

## Note 2: Two Forthcoming Maverick\* Research Documents

The following two additional pieces should appear in April 2020 (titles and summaries may change):

**“Maverick\* Research: The Internet Can Be Made Virus-Free With Biomimetic ‘Antioxi-Bots’”:** Consumers expect utility companies to provide safe, clean water and energy. As the internet becomes a utility, people increasingly expect that it will similarly be safe and virus-free. Technology product leaders can apply biomimetic techniques to create AI-based “antioxi-bots” that act like antioxidants to cleanse the internet of “virus radicals.”

**“Maverick\* Research: Monitoring Remote Worker Productivity Is Pointless”:** Remote working is becoming the norm. IT leaders must redesign their performance management systems and move away from monitoring remote workers’ productivity to measuring performance-based outcomes. Management approaches that fail to connect with remote workers’ performance and focus on monitoring their activities will undermine their trust and morale thus contributing to a toxic culture that makes it harder to achieve desired business outcomes.

## Recommended by the Authors

[Maverick\\* Research Into the Workforce’s Adaptation to Digital Society: A Gartner Theme Insight Report](#)

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