**Justine Roberts**

**CEO, Mumsnet**

The DigitasLBi UK NewFront 2015, which will take place on Friday 16th October, will explore how technology is transforming our daily lives – from our health and wellbeing, to the cars we drive, the content we consume and the way we interact with brands. Ahead of the event Sam Baker, Co-Founder and CEO of The Pool, gave her take on some of the key issues that she’ll be talking about at the event.

**1) Can you give us a sneak preview of the things you’re most keen to discuss at NewFront?**

I’m interested in thinking about the internet of things, and getting my head around some of the potentially transformative products that might result.

**2) What three technological developments in your lifetime have been most pivotal in transforming our experience of the world?**

Well, duh, the internet.

The ability to connect and communicate over the internet instantly and with anyone anywhere has been the single biggest change in our lifetimes. That information exchange has opened up endless possibilities to people almost everywhere. Obviously it took a while before it became fully functional - even now I shudder at the memory of

dial-up - but the easy access to knowledge and community that that the internet has allowed is mind blowing.

Online communities - well, I would say that, wouldn’t I?

It’s commonly said that the internet serves to demonstrate people’s preoccupation with sex, but equally it shows - in a rather cheering way - that if you give people a new sort of technology, they will work out a way to use it to communicate, support each other, and in Mumsnet’s case create elaborate running jokes about biscuits. Online communities channel this commonality of experience, reassuring people that they’re not alone, most things will be alright in the end, and that even when things really aren’t alright, somebody somewhere will have been through it already.

Smart phones and their applications

Having an incredibly powerful computer with web access that  you can carry around in your pocket made a huge difference to people’s lives

and we’re still working through the consequences. Suddenly everything, from checking your train’s departure platform to identifying a constellation, became not just possible, but intuitive, swift and smooth. Having spent the past year or so developing a new suite of apps for Mumsnet, I’ve got renewed respect for the teams who put them together; it takes an awful lot of hard work to make everything look so easy.

**3) What does the future hold – and what transformative technologies do you expect to play a key role in the coming years?**

3D printing, the internet of things and artificial intelligence (how much of what we do can be done by a robot) are going to pivotal for every organisation.

In terms specifically of online communities we need to keep an eye on where and how people want to connect and make sure we’re meeting their needs. To that end we’re about to launch a suite of apps - Talk, Pregnancy and Baby. We need to continue to improve our video offering and to incorporate live streaming and I’m also very interested in podcasts as a way of consuming content.

*The DigitasLBi UK NewFront is a collaborative thought-leadership programme aimed at stimulating creativity within the burgeoning branded content marketplace.*

*To register your interest in attending the DigitasLBi UK NewFront 2015 on Friday 16th October visit:* [*http://www.iabuk.net/events/library/digitaslbi-digital-upfront*](http://www.iabuk.net/events/library/digitaslbi-digital-upfront)