

Last Call for #DigitalSociety ... Departing Now!

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Digital business is deeply transforming society, and executive leaders carry a responsibility beyond their organizations to influence what our quickly emerging digital society will look like. To make this society a positive one, you should adopt proactive idealism — not reactive realism.

Opportunities and Challenges

- **Society.** Society is digitalizing quickly. Best practices and old rules don't work anymore. Next practices and new rules are needed, regulating digital business. As a digital society infrastructure emerges, so too do new business opportunities that organizations can tap into. But beware ... digital society comes in multiple geopolitical flavors.
- **Business.** Technology-based visions and missions are emerging, helping to solve bigger societal problems through forming cross-industry ecosystems. Examples include precision planting in agriculture, personalized healthcare, and mobility in the automotive industry. *Customer* value propositions extend to *society* value propositions. Public-sector organizations have a natural lead here.
- **People.** Individual development is required to ensure we all navigate the digital society in comfort, and with skill. We are all digital citizens and the talent ecosystem is changing — it requires a shift to lifelong learning and a higher level of digital literacy. Most jobs will change and higher levels of automation will transform daily life.

What You Need to Know

- Essentially, there is only one thing to know, but it is really important. Digital society is defined as the sum of all continuous flows of digital interactions. Rather than being designed, it emerges as the result of the collective of digital businesses, ecosystems and platforms. Consequently, business leaders have an important impact.

Insight From the Analyst

Boarding Now for #DigitalSociety!



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Welcome to Gartner's final edition of the digital society special report. We published a first wave in April, one in August, and this final update in October. In this way, we aimed to push the boundaries of our thinking — and hopefully yours, too.

Back in April, we established the concept of the digital society. In August, we described how there is no single digital society. It means different things in various parts of the world. There are different visions across various industries. And there are different levels of digital citizenship, which is the ability for people to navigate the digital society in comfort and with skill. In this edition, the main storyline is one of 'purpose'. In the emerging digital society, organizations have the opportunity to contribute to larger goals, and rediscover their mission.

Research is a two-way conversation. We would like to hear about your journey and stance on the following:

- What does the idea of a digital society mean to you?
- Should businesses focus on customer value — as that is what business is about — or develop more society-focused value propositions, tackling larger issues?
- Are your employees ready for the digitalization of society, or do they need new skills and mindsets to navigate it in comfort and with skill?

[Let us know.](#)

Kind regards,

Frank Buytendijk, Leigh McMullen and Chris Howard

Executive Overview

Definition

A *society* is a group of people involved in persistent social interaction.¹ *Digital* means there is a blend of the virtual and physical environments. Through technologies like Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled devices, location-based intelligence, augmented and virtual reality, and voice-operated artificial intelligence (AI), the physical world becomes more virtual, and the virtual world becomes more physical.

The digital society is the collection of people, organizations and things that are engaged in persistent digital interactions.

There are three elements that are core to every society:

- **Culture.** This includes values, norms, behaviors and self-reflection. Currently, there is a complex dynamic in how we value technology as part of society, and how we behave toward it. On the one hand, we are comfortable with digital technologies. The internet, big data, social media and smartphones already have changed our lives, and we expect the IoT and AI to do so even more. At the same time, we find many new advancements “creepy.” New cultural norms are evolving.
- **Structure.** Technology is affecting how we structure our society — in some parts of the world it is becoming more decentralized, in others more centralized. Social media allow communities to self-organize. Blockchain technologies propose a radical distributed nature of transactions and interactions potentially disrupting the monolithic platforms that dominate today. Digital giants and nations battle over a new balance of control through legislation and legal proceedings.
- **Interactions.** Advances in AI and robotics mean that we aren’t just innovating in how we communicate with each other through the use of technology; we are also starting to communicate directly with technology, working side by side with robots.² Talking with people-literate technologies is becoming the dominant user experience.³ And “things” are interacting with each other, starting to take part in persistent social interaction. Data and context are stored “ambiently” within these interactions. Technology is starting to display signs of agency — the capacity to act in a certain environment and context.⁴ How will we recognize that agency socially, legally and practically?

As a result, society is changing and, as a consequence, so must business.

The Digital Society Emerges From the Bottom-Up

It is also important to define what the digital society is *not*. Society doesn’t equal government, and digital society doesn’t equal e-government or smart city. E-government and the smart city are public-sector parts of the digital society, but the business world has a large (if not larger) stake, too.

This digital society is *not* deliberately designed; it emerges as the sum of all digital interactions of its members — people, organizations and things. That is why everyone has a responsibility for it, through positive and constructive contributions. These include ethical technology designs, fair business models and transparent digital strategies.

Figures 1 and 2 show how people, organizations and things interact, how this interaction forms ecosystems, how the totality of ecosystems forms our civilization's digital infrastructure,⁵ and how that infrastructure forms the digital society when it comes alive.

Figure 1. The Emerging #DigitalSociety: Levels 0 and 1

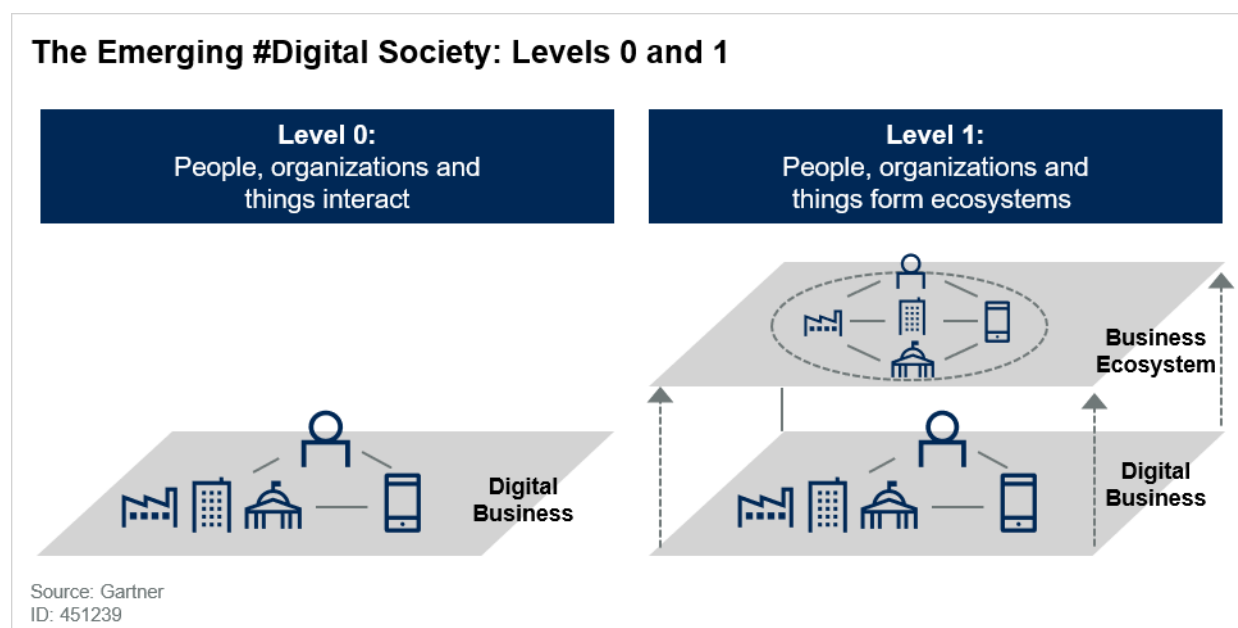
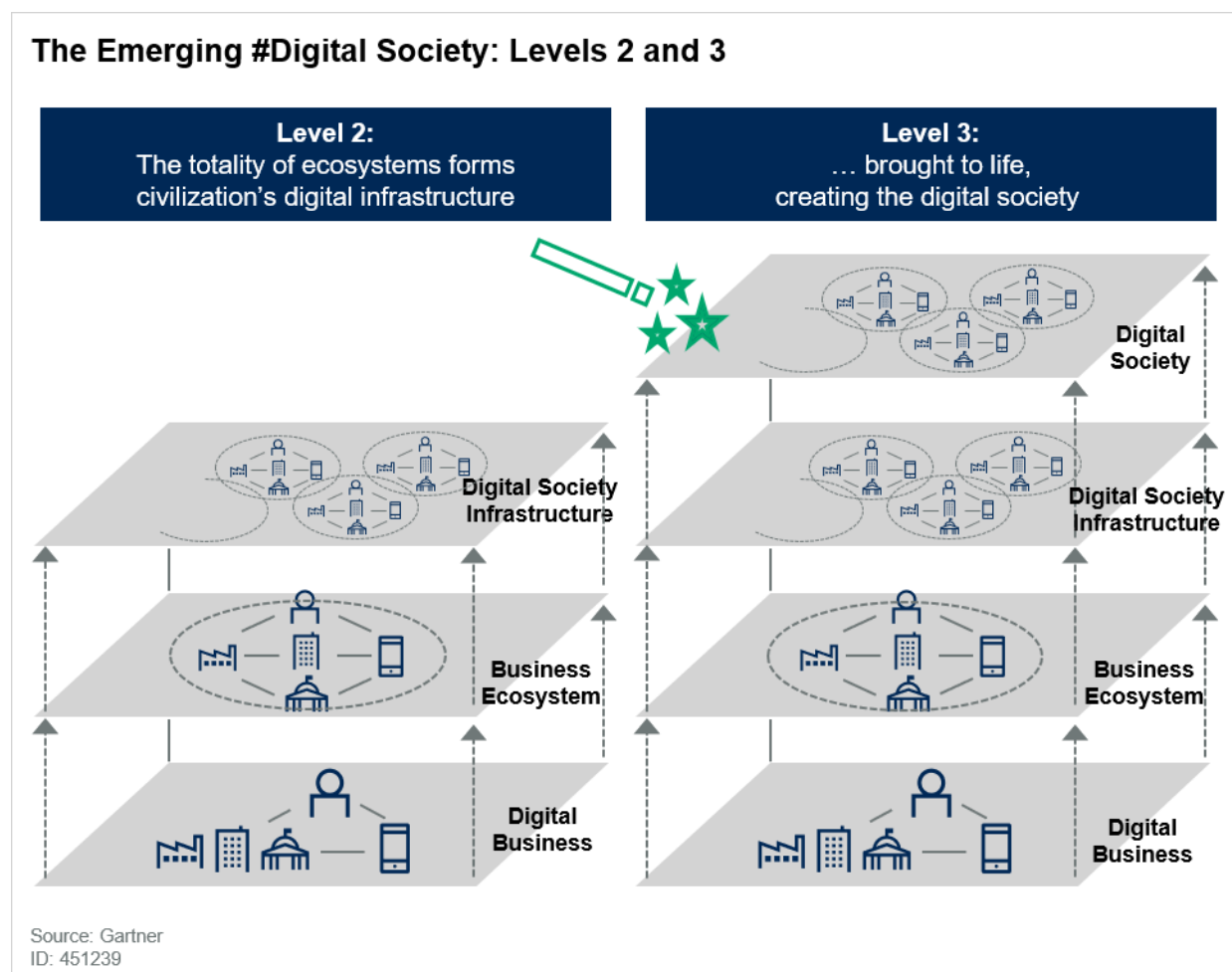


Figure 2. The Emerging #DigitalSociety: Levels 2 and 3



The Business Perspective

The business case is really simple. Business and society are completely interdependent — business cannot function without a societal infrastructure, and society flourishes based on healthy business. The same goes for government. Government governs society, and society requires government.

If there are changes in culture, structure and interaction, business and governance change. For any business or government to ignore this or, in the case of business, treat it as an externality, would mean suicide.

As an executive team — in a commercial enterprise or the public sector — you have a larger responsibility than before. In

the traditional business world, you were responsible for processes and systems in your enterprise, and for instructing users how to deal with them. You would express a successful business case in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Now, with your technology choices deeply affecting society, this becomes part of your responsibility as well.

In most organizations, it would be unrealistic to assume that you, as an executive, can change and shape the digital society all by yourself. Many factors are at play, including politics and legal trends, economic growth and social acceptance of digital technology. Other businesses must be factored in, too.

So far, the digital giants — Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, WeChat— have had a much bigger impact on what the digital society will look like. But that doesn't mean you should take a reactive stance. Remember, the digital society is the sum of all digital interactions. A number of these interactions are yours. Whether you want to or not, you also exert influence simply by being in business. Your enterprise can't live outside of society — it is part of it.

This is not the time for realism. This is the time for idealism and big goals. As you help shape the digital society, even in the smallest of ways, make sure your contribution is a positive one.

Research Highlights

There are three main storylines in this special report:

- **Society:** What do we want the digital society to look like?
- **Business:** What can business do to contribute to the digital society?
- **People:** How do people skills and competences need to change in the digital society?

Vision, Idealism, Activism

There are many stories to be told. Stories of apocalypse, doom and totalitarian control. We don't deny these scenarios, and some research notes will touch on them.

But our specific focus in this special report is how to make a positive contribution.

We want it to be about vision, a good sense of idealism and activism.

Obviously, opinions differ. Your ideals may be different from our ideals. This is why we will make sure that our opinion is clear. Our idealistic scenarios are labeled “Gartner WWWLTSCT” (what we would like to see come true).

Society: What Do We Want the Digital Society to Look Like?

In the first edition of this special report, we focused on the idealistic side of the digital society, to sketch perspective. In the second edition, we examined how there is not just one digital society, but how it looks different in various parts of the world. In this last edition, we expand the body of research on digital society infrastructure. How are services developing that every business will benefit from? How will privacy develop? What will be the business impact of chatbots that act in the name of consumers? And why do we need “dropchains” more than we need blockchains?

Gartner’s WWWLTSCT: It would be good if digital technologies become part of society’s infrastructure, protecting the needs of the citizens. They can be run by commercial companies, but should be implemented to take larger societal needs into account. This can be achieved by regulation, but also by having a strong social value proposition; the ability to express the value of a service in terms of social goals, instead of individual customer value. Compare to the role of utility companies, for instance, helping consumers use less gas, water and electricity. Digital Giants should be forced to promote a more responsible use of their technologies.

Related Research

New Research:

- “Move to Contextual Privacy in Digital Society” — Some say privacy is dead in the #DigitalSociety, but that couldn’t be farther from the truth. Security and risk management leaders must embrace the notion of contextual privacy to continue to maintain trust, prevent exclusion or discrimination, create value and protect customers in digital business.
- “Give AI Applications the Ability to Bridge Machine Cultures” — Sophisticated AI ecosystems will develop different “cultures,” and AI powered identities must interact to accomplish their missions. Build culture-bridging capabilities by focusing on autonomy, agency and learning.

- “Preparing for Your Customers Using Automation Technologies to Interact With You More Frequently” — Not only enterprises adopt AI. Consumers do too, automating many tasks. This affects customers interactions in terms of volume and impact on the business. Recognize consumer automation technologies as a force to deal with.
- “Maverick* Research: The World Needs Dropchains — Ignorance and Forgetting as a Service” — In a digital society, all is easily discoverable and remembered forever. But society needs ignorance and the ability to forget to function. Blockchain-related technologies can create “dropchains” to deliver forgetting as a service.

Previously Published Research (Second Edition):

- “Digital Society Infrastructure Will Set the Enterprise’s Business Context” — Digital society infrastructure will not be an incremental improvement over today’s societal infrastructure. It will impose radically different rules for operating within it. CIOs should leverage its components, cater to how people want to live, prepare for the scale it comes with, and address new challenges.
- “Geopolitical Ideologies Are Shaping Our Digital Future” — Globalization through the use of digital technology is under pressure. Geopolitical forces mean there will be multiple digital societies across the world, forcing businesses to a more local approach.
- “CIOs Must Heed the Global AI Race While Planning for Staff and Data Fallout” — Excitement about AI is driving a wave of nationalist investment and technological rivalry. Unlike previous generations of such races, however, AI primacy lacks unmistakable benchmarks and citizen-visible trophy events. CIOs can plan now for stresses like staff turnover and advanced analytical strategies.
- “Globalists vs. Nationalists — A Wall Can’t Save You From the Cloud” — There are different views on the digital society, with nationalists and globalists. This is particularly impactful in the area of cloud computing. How will this affect your cloud strategy?
- “Framing the Need for Regulating Digital Society” — Declining confidence in digital firms and social media require a regulatory response. Leaders should collaborate on new rules to protect individuals and groups while encouraging an innovative, growing economy.
- “Defining a New Framework for Regulating Digital Society” — Traditional rules and regulations don’t suffice for the digital society. A new regulatory framework is needed, based on four scenarios: shared goals, shared standards, public goals and public prescription.
- “The Future of Commerce Payments in a Digital Society” — Payment has the potential to be entirely cashless, but this brings additional challenges in reliability, security, convenience, and more. To remain competitive and optimize customer satisfaction, application leaders responsible for digital commerce must anticipate the future of consumer payments.
- “Customer-Driven Alliances Will Unlock Blockchain Potential” — Blockchain technologies will ignite the era of decentralization, where customers own their data and decide how it is used. In the context of digital society, decentralized identity enables individuals who want to keep (or take back) their data as customers.

- “Maverick* Research Into How the Digital Era Makes Society Vulnerable: A Gartner Trend Insight Report” — Inexpensive and easy-to-use digital technologies, in the hands of many, leads to unintended consequences and a vulnerable society. This Maverick collection of research explores various angles of what you can do to avoid this?
- “A Moral Compass for Uncharted Digital Territory” — There is pressure coming from customers, employees, regulators and investors to take societal issues more into account. Executives should implement digital ethics.
- “How Customer Experience Changes When Your Customer Is a Thing” — The customer of the future is a “thing.” In the digital society, “things” start to become actors in society, displaying a form of agency; the capacity to act in a certain environment.

Previously Published Research (First Edition):

- “Digitopia 2035: 3 Scenarios for the #DigitalSociety, and What They Mean for Us Today” — Ask people about the future and they will share their hopes and fears for today. We crowdsourced stories from around the world and summarized them within three common scenarios. They introduce a new narrative, based on a more sustainable society.
- “Digitopia 2035 Scenario: A Smaller Circle — How to Create More Meaningful Connections” — We often assume that the digital world is a global world. All devices must be connected. Technologies need to scale. But the Digitopia 2035 stories paint a different picture.
- “Digitopia 2035 Scenario: A Question of Convenience — How to Create More Digital Value” — Many of our Digitopia 2035 stories stress how technology creates convenience for people, but with a shadow of totalitarian control always looming. Should we be striving for convenience?
- “Digitopia 2035 Scenario: A Sustainable Society — How to Increase Your Digital Ambition” — The strongest desire emerging from the Digitopia 2035 stories is for a more sustainable society, not only environmentally but also economically.
- “Digitopia 2035: All Stories Collected” — Digitopia 2035 is a set of stories whose plots are still being written, but clear patterns emerge across people’s imagined futures: a smaller circle, a question of convenience, and a sustainable society.
- “The #DigitalSociety Requires a Digital Social Contract” — This report provides more background to the Digitopia scenarios through discussing the need for a new digital social contract, around the concepts of connections, communities and contributions.
- “Market Insight: Disruptive Macro Trends for 2025 — Smart Social Citizens Shape Digital Society” — Although the digital society does not equal the smart city, there are parallels. Many developments are bottom-up and citizen-led.
- “Digital Business Success Depends on Civilization Infrastructure: A Gartner Trend Insight Report” — A merged virtual/physical world will need an enormous amount of new infrastructure. Part of digital transformation is about contributing to civilization infrastructure and the digital society it enables.

- “Get Ready for Blockchain to Reshape Society” — Money and markets drive prosperity for society and business. The impact of blockchain on economic and social behaviors will revolutionize your enterprise interactions with society.
- “Ignition Guide to Scenario Planning” — Would you like to conduct your own scenario planning exercise? This research guides you through the basics.

Other Gartner Resources:

- *Video:* Watch the replay of [“The Looming Impact of the Emerging Digital Society — A Panel Discussion”](#) with Gartner luminaries Debra Logan, Leigh McMullen, Bettina Tratz-Ryan and Dale Kutnick. They discuss what the postglobal world could and should look like, and what that would mean for organizations today. Viewers have called it “knowledgeable, thought-provoking and disturbing” and commented “we still have a lot to figure out.”
- *Blog:* [“Why Do Things the Hard Way?”](#)
- *Blog:* [“Technology and Politics”](#)
- *Blog:* [“The #DigitalSociety and the Digital Social Contract”](#)
- *Blog:* [“#DigitalSociety”](#)

Business: What Can Business Do to Contribute to the Digital Society?

Digital business can go far beyond increasing an organization’s levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Digital business can even go beyond new types of customer value. In many industries, the vision of what can be achieved focuses on larger societal issues. As a consequence, for many, technology has now become a CEO topic.

Gartner’s WWWLTSC: The authors of this report welcome business becoming more “mission-driven” again. We are thrilled to help businesses around the world realize ideas so big they kick a dent in planet Earth. Businesses should extend their customer value propositions with societal value propositions. Public-sector organizations should behave a little less like businesses and focus more on their original missions.

The examples below show that focusing on societal value does not conflict with focusing on shareholder value. On the contrary, these examples each represent new opportunities and new

sources for shareholder value. This is the main difference with many of the corporate social responsibility initiatives of a decade ago: sustainability is at the core not only of a business, but also of an entire industry.

Here are a few examples of offering value to help improve on larger social issues:

- **Agriculture.** Precision planning, watering, crop management and environment-specific GMOs will increase crop yields by upward of 50%,⁶ while at the same time automation will make organic “microfarming” possible at a household level. These visions will help feed a growing population.
- **Healthcare.** Many believe one of the most disruptive trends in healthcare will be about personalization, in terms of diagnosis, drug development and patient care.⁷ This will help with an aging population, and may help fight complex diseases. But much of this is based on the specifics of people’s DNA. Innovation comes with many questions around ethics and requires new competences in terms of DNA information security.
- **Automotive.** Two major trends are autonomous cars and car-sharing programs. By 2025, more than 12% of newly produced vehicles will have autonomous driving hardware capability of Level 3 or higher, based on the SAE International standard J3016.⁸ The global car-sharing market will grow to \$36.4 billion in 2025, well overtaking the size of the car rental market.⁹ These trends will greatly affect road safety and climate, but also disrupt other industries such as hospitality and insurance. This may help economic mobility.
- **Retail.** The impact of 3D printing is bound to be transformative. In many western infrastructures, inner cities and towns have greatly suffered from shops moving to suburbs and industrial areas.¹⁰ If tools can be printed quickly and at a reasonable cost, this might reinvigorate inner cities. There would be no need for a large DIY store if a small “mom-and-pop store” can 3D print tools without holding a large inventory.¹¹ Massive distribution centers could be replaced with a highly automated system for fine distribution. Such a system could predict demand and use small business spaces in inner cities and smaller towns to deliver faster, at lower cost and covering shorter differences — perhaps even via drone.¹² This would drive a more local-for-local economy while increasing efficiency.
- **Other.** Transformative trends in other industries that affect how society works include blockchain in financial services and the public sector, smart grids in utilities, learning analytics in education, and drones on logistics.

Related Research

New Research:

- “#DigitalSociety Will Demand That a Clearly Articulated Purpose Guide the Enterprise” — A business being mission-driven is actually a more traditional view than being shareholder driven. Increased transparency, consumer activism and the opportunities of the emerging digital society make that organization need to revisit their mission and purpose.
- “Rationales for the Idealist Imperative in Business” — Ethical corporate behavior drives significant business value as it is among the most important distinguishing factors for consumers and employees.
- “Supply Chain Brief: Are You Really Ready to Share Your Product’s Origin Story?” — More consumers are choosing sustainable products with descriptions of where and how they are made — a so-called origin story. Engage business partners to define a management system that mitigates the risks of supply chain transparency.
- “New Institutions Will Renew and Replace Industrial Age Institutions” — Institutions — the way society organizes to deliver the services it needs, like education, healthcare and banking — must reinvent themselves to stay relevant. Their mission is changing, their constituents are changing, and their ecosystems are changing.

Previously Published Research (Second Edition):

- “Create an Industry Vision for Digital Business” — Everybody contributes to the digital society, so it is best to make it a good one. Create a digital business vision for your own industry and evangelize.
- “Retail Supply Chains Embrace the Circular Economy” — Leading businesses including Walmart, Amazon, Target, Carrefour, H&M, and Nike are actively pursuing circular economy models that necessitate the supply chain to transform existing operating models.
- “City of Cape Town Averts Water Crisis, Showing How CIOs Can Inspire Changes in Social Behaviors Through Data Analytics” — Sometimes, extreme situations help solve thorny problems. Cape Town faced a major crisis, having no water. Better data, along with action from the CIO, really helped turn the crisis around.
- “Seize the Technology Advantage With Combinatorial Digital Innovation” — Tapping into digital society infrastructure helps organizations innovate in new ways, by using combined sets of technologies, instead of pursuing use cases based on a single innovative type of technology.
- “Unleash Your Inner Futurist to Survive Digital Transformation” — Organizations must take a more futuristic approach to strategic planning. This will help to create a bigger picture when considering the societal consequences of decisions that organizations make today.
- “AI Ethics: Use 5 Common Guidelines as Your Starting Point” — The ethics of AI is a hot topic. Several organizations have published their guidelines. Data and analytics leaders should look into the most common ones as a starting point for developing their own.

- “Why Every Company Will Need an ESG Data Strategy by 2021 and What Chief Supply Chain Officers Can Do About It” — Many organizations take a very basic approach to disclosing more environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance data, leading to more risk. It is time to create more formal ESG strategies.

Previously Published Research (First Edition):

- “Driving Digital Business Transformation for Industry Leadership: An Executive Perspective” — This research explores how organizational functions shape and enable digital business transformation.
- “How to Use Data for Good to Impact Society” — Data can be used for the good of society and bring about business benefits at the same time, such as getting new insights for your own operations and competing better for limited talent.
- “The CIO’s Guide to Digital Ethics: Leading Your Enterprise in a Digital Society” — The speed of digital technology adoption is presenting ethical dilemmas for business, as it is easy to cross “the creepy line.” Executive teams have an opportunity to navigate and guide the digital ethics conversation by asking: “Are we doing the right things?” An ethics framework embedded in a digital strategy is a path forward.
- “Digital Trust — Redefining Trust for the Digital Era: A Gartner Trend Insight Report” — Trust underpins every business interaction, but trust levels in business and government are low. Organizations need to double down on trust in the digital society.
- “Individuals, Groups and Society in the Loop of Artificial Intelligence Design and Development” — The deep effect of AI-enhanced applications on business and wider society increasingly mandates the need for better human-in-the-loop solutions to train, calibrate and explain AI system behavior. CIOs must grasp the strategic and design requirements of running a human and algorithmic business.

People: How Do People Skills and Competencies Need to Change in the Digital Society?

The big worry of the last few years has been the impact of AI and robotization on jobs. Will there be mass redundancies as some have predicted? The first surveys show a different picture. Workers who have seen AI in their workplace are more positive about the effects of AI on jobs: 57% see no change on the number of jobs, while 27% see a net increase of jobs.¹³

Still, the digitalization of society poses a significant shift for people, both professionally and personally. Technology deeply affects the social fabric itself. A society consists of a group of actors engaged in persistent social interaction. A society has a culture, values and is part of our identity. Our culture, values, decisions and identity are influenced by the technologies we communicate through, with and in our name.

We need to work on our digital citizenship to be productive and constructive participants of the digital society. There are three levels on which we can be part of the digital society:

- **Digital present:** Everybody is part of the digital society, whether they want to be or not. Being present is the basic level, an acknowledgment of society being what it is, and being a part of it.
- **Digital active:** Citizens demonstrate active participation in digital society, *consuming* a wide range of available services and technologies.
- **Digital collaborating:** Citizens are actively *contributing* to the digital society, building new connections and supporting shared goals.

Gartner's WWWLTSCT: Digital businesses have a responsibility toward society and need to deliver safe and secure services. But there is a role for government as well, investing in people's education on how to be active and contributing digital citizens, and equipping people with critical thinking and the confidence to be positive contributors to the digital society. As citizens of the digital society, we are also individually responsible for educating ourselves, to know how to handle new digital technologies responsibly as part of daily life. Digital citizenship should be a discussion between business, government and people.

Related Research

New Research:

- "Maverick* Research: Gen AI — Artificial Intelligence Empowers a Generation of Radical Thinkers" — The generation born after 2010 only knows a world with artificial intelligence technology. We must prepare for Generation AI family members, consumers and workers who are creative, empowered and radical thinkers.
- "Squaring Maslow's 'Pyramid' to Meet the Needs of a Digital Society" — Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been a cornerstone in sociology since its inception. However, the digital society changes the way how we live, and develop. Time to update Maslow's hierarchy.
- "Define Your Purpose to Guide Your #DigitalSociety Career Choices" — The digital society brings considerable change. But what keeps constant as a North Star for IT executives in their career development is having a clear sense of their purpose.
- "Using the Digital Citizen Equity Index to Drive Decision Making in Digital Business" — Drilling down on the previously published digital citizen equity index, comparing and contrasting the business and consumer index in multiple countries, helping organizations in planning for their digital transformation.

- “Digital Citizen Equity Index: CIO’s Guide to Locate Right Skills and Resources for Digital Business Operations” — Use Gartner’s Digital Citizen Equity Index for Talent Acquisition. Where do you find the right skills and resources?
- “Digital Citizen Equity Index: Strategize for the Digitalization Path of Emerging Economies” — Digital disruption means different things in different parts of the world, and digital business causes emerging economies to develop differently. Use the Digital Citizen Equity Index to customize your digital strategy.

Previously Published Research (Second Edition):

- “Digital Citizen Equity Index: How to Operate a Digital Ecosystem Business Within Digital Society” — Your digital strategy is unlikely to work universally. Different countries have different levels of sophistication in terms of digital citizenship and how well people navigate the digital society.
- “Toolkit: Digital Citizen Equity Index to Identify Digital Business Opportunities in Countries” — Understand the ease of digital engagement in various parts of the world — how to treat digitally present citizens, digitally active citizens and digitally contributing citizens.
- “Gen Z: How to Lead These Natural Digital Connectors” — Generation Zers are the natural connectors to the digital society. CIOs who know how to retain, inspire and lead them reap the rewards from their hard work, passion and disruptive ideas.
- “Finding and Building Talent in the Digital Talent Ecosystem” — Technology leaders play three roles: investing in new talent technologies, finding talent, and navigating as individuals in a quickly evolving ecosystem and digital society.
- “Leverage Augmented Intelligence to Win With AI” — The future of work is not in AI replacing human beings, but in AI augmenting jobs. Augmented intelligence helps people learn and improve, so people can do more work that is challenging, stretches them and takes them to the next level.

Previously Published Research (First Edition):

- “Getting Started With Data Literacy and Information as a Second Language: A Gartner Trend Insight Report” — The increasingly pervasive nature of data makes it crucial for all employees to learn to “speak data.” This follow-up to our first data literacy special report outlines practical advice for data and analytics leaders to start data literacy programs as a key to a broader digital dexterity campaign.
- “Future of Work Scenarios 2035: How Will Leaders Manage in a Majority-Bot Workforce World” — The impact of AI-enabled software and hardware machines on society and the workplace depends on the trajectories of strong forces. In this research, we explore four scenarios for the future of work and offer advice to leaders on how to manage the machine-human workforce in each.

- “Introducing Digital Connectivism: A New Philosophy for the Digital Society” — We are creating a digital society that is reshaping who we are and how we live. This new dynamic needs a new philosophy as our old business-driven ways don’t work anymore. Digital leaders should embrace “digital connectivism” to navigate the new digital society with skill and in comfort.
- “Fresh Hot Roles for the Information-Savvy Organization” — Successful data and analytics programs have begun to require new types of skills. The bad news: These skills may be unfamiliar to data and analytics leaders. The good news: These leaders can learn and adapt new skills from similar roles that exist elsewhere in their organization.

Other Gartner Resources:

- *Infographic:* [“The Future of Work: Are You Ready?”](#)
- *Webinar:* [“The Future of Work and Talent: Culture, Diversity, Technology”](#)
- *Blog:* [“How CIOs Can Prepare for the Future of Work”](#)

So, What Should You Do?

When we think about it, the digital society seems so big, not unlike the question of “life, the universe and everything.” Except you know the answer in this case isn’t necessarily “42.”¹⁴

Where do you even get started?

There are a few things you can do. *Need* to do, even. It starts with raising awareness and with education:

- **Take action** — Put the topic and principles of the digital society on the agenda of every roundtable, conference call, networking event, vendor meeting, and so on. Shape and share your views, listening to and learning from others. Start specific digital initiatives aimed at public service, in addition to achieving your business goals (e.g., teach, dedicate resources to provide digital literacy training).
- **Take ownership** — For every digital initiative, determine a measurable impact that will mean a positive contribution to the digital society. Track those measures over time.
- **Take responsibility** — Start close to home, investing in making your digital workplace a better one; then expand. Test which technologies are appreciated by employees, customers and citizens, and continue with them. Fail fast with the ones that are not appreciated.

What will be your part and your contribution to the digital society?

Related Priorities

Table 1. Related Priorities

Priority	Focus
CIO Excellence in I&T Operating Model Design and Strategy Execution	Enterprise focus on digital transformation increased markedly this past year. CIOs must lay the digital foundation and transform the I&T operating model to enable strategic execution at digital speed.
CIO Innovation and Strategic Business Change Leadership	In the digital era, the CIO serves as both business leader and IT leader. This initiative focuses on the first job, showing how the CIO can contribute to an enterprisewide business strategy.
Cross-Industry Innovation and Disruption	Create business and customer value by understanding and leveraging innovations, processes and technologies from multiple industries.

Source: Gartner

Gartner Analysts Supporting This Trend



Frank Buytendijk



Jorge Lopez



Leigh McMullen



Bettina Tratz-Ryan



Bart Willemsen

Related Resources

Webinars

- [“The Looming Impact of the Emerging Digital Society? A Panel Discussion”](#)
- [“Living With Digital: From Business Innovation to Societal Disruption”](#)
- [“Digitopia 2035: Why the Future Has a Bad Rep, and How the Pragmatic Futurist Will Save the Day”](#)
- [“What the Digital Workplace Will Look Like in 2028”](#)

Conferences

Attend one of our many [Gartner Data and Analytics conferences](#) around the globe. At the Gartner Data and Analytics Summit 2019, we'll help you create the future — a future based on data you can trust, analytics you can rely on, and the insight needed to make game-changing business decisions.

[Gartner IT Symposium/Xpo](#)

Explore the technology, insights and trends shaping the future of IT and business.

Articles

- [“Why We Need a Digital Social Contract”](#)
- [“Getting Digital Ethics Right”](#)
- [“Digital Disruption Myths”](#)

Peer Connect

Peer Connect is a private community in which Gartner clients can exchange insight and advice on their mission-critical priorities. Join the discussions occurring in the Data and Analytics forum, and ask questions and share answers on Key Initiatives. Peruse these pages:

- [Peer Connect Think Tank Forum](#)
- [Peer Connect Conversation — “Are You a Pragmatic Futurist?”](#)
- [“Peer Connect Perspectives: How Can I Explain Digital Transformation to the Board of Directors?”](#)

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Evidence

- ¹ [“Society,”](#) Wikipedia.

² By 2023, over 30% of operational warehouse workers will be supplemented by collaborative robots — from “Top 10 Strategic Technology Trends for 2019: Autonomous Things.”

³ By 2020, at least 40% of people will interact primarily with people-literate technologies, removing much of the perceived need to invest further in improving computer literacy — “Forecast: The Business Value of Artificial Intelligence, Worldwide, 2017-2025.”

⁴ “Introducing Digital Connectivism: A New Philosophy for the Digital Society.”

⁵ “Think at the Scale of Civilization Infrastructure to Plan for Digital Business.”

⁶ [“Precision Agriculture: Bigger Yields From Smaller Farms,”](#) CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems.

⁷ [“Personalized Medicine,”](#) Wikipedia.

⁸ “Top 10 Strategic Technology Trends for 2019: Autonomous Things.”

⁹ [“Ride-Hailing Service Market Overview,”](#) Allied Market Research.

¹⁰ [“The Death of a Great American City: Why Does Anyone Still Live in Detroit?”](#) The Guardian.

¹¹ [“3D Printing’s Present and Future Impact on the Supply Chain,”](#) ECN.

¹² [“Autonomous Vehicles for Postal Deliveries Take Over Europe’s Streets,”](#) Interesting Engineering.

¹³ The 2018 Gartner Consumer AI Perceptions Study was conducted online during January and February 2018 among 4,019 respondents in the U.S. and U.K.

Respondents ranged from 18 through 74 years old, with quotas and weighting applied for age, gender, region and income. Results are representative of each country’s online population.

The survey was developed by Gartner analysts familiar with the topics covered, and was reviewed, tested and administered by Gartner’s Research Data and Analytics team. The respondents were randomly drawn from a number of external consumer panels.

While country-level data is weighted to mirror the online population distribution for demographic variables, the data is NOT weighted to mirror the size of each market or meant to represent the world at large.

¹⁴ [“The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy,”](#) Wikipedia.

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