

Digital Transformation That's What's Happening



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Preamble

Overwhelming speed and ‘innovative’ quality of technological developments are boldly disrupting corporates across industry sectors, touching lives of common people, and transforming their way of living life. Technologies like Blockchain, are expected to bring in foundational changes in a nation’s economic and societal ecosystem. Remaining abreast of such developments is an imperative for every professional. This will help enduring with relevance and gain ‘stragility’ for contributing for attainment of competitive advantages.

This monthly column is an initiative of the Directorates of Journal and Publications and Advanced Studies of our Institute. Predominant objective is to share what all are happening in digital transformations both in India and abroad. The present author will make efforts to conduct extensive research for sharing his own views and inputs on the latest happenings, new use cases, initiatives of sovereign nations and multilateral agencies, etc. It is very difficult to restrain from writing about all but have to restrain by sharing only some major developments in recent past.

Digital Transformations

In following sections certain recent developments have been covered. Readers may visit www.icmai-rnj.in for webliographical references and get full inputs as available.

Artificial Intelligence: It is amazing to note how much friendly a technology AI is emerging to help people in quest for solving problems for society. Here is a story of a lady. She is using radiology in a hospital of Bhubaneswar to identify tiny bulges in human stomachs which are potentially cancer prone. She is not a doctor. Her effort is for teaching artificial intelligence to a machine that can help accurate diagnosis by a doctor¹.

Versatility of AI is transcending all areas of solution building. The most encouraging is that AI is emerging as a friend of all for keeping cyber criminals away. It is also acquiring self-propelling energies. More and more corporates, who were observing peers attaining competitive advantage using digital technologies, now plunging into the act of digital transformation, particularly using AI with IoTs and Blockchain.

Fintech: People’s Bank of China (PBoC), as reported by its Dy. Director Mu Changchun, is ready with its prototype for ‘China’s Digital Currency’ on a two-tier platform. Its layer one will be operated by PBoC and layer two by commercial banks². One should keenly watch this development keeping in view the USA’s political groups criticizing facebook’s initiative for cryptocurrency Libra.

Blockchain: Giant MNCs like Unilever, Kellogg, Pfizer, AT&T have become anchor brands for IBM’s pilot consortium called ‘IBM Mediaocean Blockchain’³. This platform will bring transparency, trust, cost reduction and facilitate the process of reconciliation in their complex tasks of advertisements

through digital media. Blockchain will create the trust verified chain from every dollar spent to the end user. It will have potentials to cut out several inefficiencies in marketplace. In a recent use case, a large HR hiring agency will deploy a blockchain enabled hiring platform to streamline internal processes such as secure uploading of job seekers' profiles and their distribution among various platforms. Efforts are multiplying for gainfully applying Blockchain to agriculture and environment management.

Robotic Process Automation: Will you believe that the next Russian Soyuz spacecraft will be navigated by a humanoid Skybot sitting in commander's chair? It is one of the latest versions of Russia's FEDOR series robots serving as all-purpose stand-in for humans in everything from rescue work to driving cars and now, flying into space. Such robots will be artificially intelligent and have cognitive skills almost like of a human astronaut⁴.

Artificially intelligent Robots will soon be able to identify wrongdoers through face and outfit recognition ability and take actions, including killing if need be. This group of Robots will eventually be of help to security forces for surveillance and dealing with strategy execution in battlefields and curbing terrorism.

Robotists have successfully brought out the next genre of Robots called Cobots by applying DevOps concept. These are designed to interact and collaborate with human beings at a shared workspace. Cobots will ensure delivery with higher speed, quality and cost optimisation, yet will not cause much reduction in workforce⁵.

Digitalisation of Sports: Cricket enthusiast will be happy to learn that a Smart Chip, planted in a ball, will now bring amazing advancements for umpires taking more accurate decisions and help trainers in training players more effectively. The moot question is, will it take away some fun from sports⁶?

Internet of Things: The present author is thinking of a day when refrigerators will be able place orders on behalf of its owner the weekly / monthly requirements of vegetables and other eatables directly to the market aggregators through simultaneous applications IoTs and cognitive technology. 'Track & Trace' capability of Blockchain will help ensuring that spurious items are not delivered by tracing each item to its farmer or producer as appropriate.

Initiatives and Reforms

Despite symptoms of slowdown Indian startup ecosystem is marching ahead with a reported investment of \$ 4.7 Bln. during the first half of 2019, which is 9% more than that of the same period of 2018⁷. Government of India has withdrawn Angel Tax which will be a major booster for more funds flowing into technology based startups.

IMF in its recent publication titled 'The Rise of Digital Money' has expressed concern about implications of digital currencies, viz., Alipay. Libra. M-Pesa. Paxos. Stablecoins, WeChatPay, etc.⁸ Haunting questions are whether these are at all useful for mass as fiat currencies, are these financial instruments, what will be people's reaction in their adoption; how central banks will react and regulate for protecting interests of all, will the financial ecosystem of any country at all be benefitted and what are the consequential risks? All these have been dealt with in this paper.

Israeli Authorities are engaged in licensing and regulation of Fintech ventures, Digi-insurance, P2P credit providers, digital wallets, blockchain based and other payment services providers⁹.

Interestingly Sophia, the most talked about artificially intelligent Humanoid, has officially been granted citizenship by Saudi Arabia¹⁰. She(!) has started speaking in international conferences.

The reader may rightly get a feeling that very many new industrial activities have started being rolled out by digital transformations in Industry 4.0 era. Finance professionals and CXOs have a distinctive role to play in this era for both co-developing and making best uses of all the transformative solutions.

Webliography

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