

Digital Humanism Makes People Better, Not Technology Better

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Digital humanism is the recognition that digital business revolves around people, not technology. CIOs and business leaders who recognize that digital business revolves around people's value will see employee capabilities translate into product, service and market gains.

Analysis

The emerging digital world requires human-centric digital leadership. It is the notion that people must be a central focus in the manifestation of digital businesses and digital workplaces. CIOs and business leaders must integrate human-centric digital leadership into their overall strategic plans to drive successful digital strategies. Our focus on a digital business philosophy that centers on human values and interests is called digital humanism.

By 2020, Gartner predicts that our planet will be home to 30 billion things with embedded intelligence combined with nearly 8 billion smart devices. That means that by 2020, there will be a ratio of approximately six intelligent devices/things for every human on the planet. While we are not suggesting that technology will run our lives by 2020, we are suggesting that humans risk becoming overwhelmed by technology. Enterprises risk having customers and employees tune out technology all together.

At one time, human-centered design focused on the user experience or cognitive interfaces. It provided a useful approach to making technology usable or accessible for people. What is different now is that previous approaches were appropriate practices, while digital humanism is now an operating principle. These practices perfect what we know, as operating principles establish mechanisms for dealing with the impact of a massive influx of technology.

Why should CIOs and business leaders care about digital humanism? If they don't pay attention, they could risk losing a competitive edge. Digital business places the customer, citizen, student and worker at the center of all activity. At one time, we said the Internet placed people at the center of activity. However, that changed, as most enterprises leverage the Internet as the center of their channel strategy.

When we combined the Internet and Internet-derived technologies with internal business processes, e-business emerged. Again, while organizations believed they were putting people at the

center of all activity, they were not. They were just optimizing processes to attract and retain as many customers as possible by assuming that the enterprise knew what was best for people.

Even today, digital marketing as a strategy claims it puts customers at the center of the enterprise. Again, that is not the case. Digital marketing is essentially extreme e-business. It puts too much effort into creating a "market of one" for each customer. Technologies, such as big data and analytics, create an illusion of putting customer understanding first.

All that has changed with digital business. Digital business traits include location awareness, Internet of Things, wearable computing and even smartphones. Those traits are combined with the ability to assemble on-the-fly value from people, places and things (e.g., digital business moments). During those moments or chains of events, people are at the center of activity. Last year, we introduced digital business as a force that is reshaping industries and redefining the role of IT.

We said that digital business connects not only people and businesses, but also connects people and businesses with things to drive revenue and efficiency. Digital business helps to eliminate barriers that now exist among industry segments while creating new value chains and business opportunities that traditional businesses cannot offer. It is creating new and disruptive competitive advantages by blurring the digital and physical worlds. By 2020, more than 7 billion people and businesses, and close to 35 billion devices, will be connected to the Internet (see "Agenda Overview for Digital Business, 2015").

Digital business also offers CIOs and business leaders the ability to assemble value from business moments, which also centers on humans. These business moments showcase how, where and when elements of digital business converge to produce business value. A business moment is short in duration (perhaps just seconds). The catalyst sets in motion a chain of events involving people, business and things that span multiple industries and ecosystems (see "Seize the Moment: Driving Digital Business Into 2015"). By inspiring creative ideas within the business, business moments help CIOs identify new opportunities. Within the business moment, people are very much involved in the activity.

Our 4Q14 digital business research collection (see "Digital Business Is Here Now") is centered on providing CIOs with the appropriate tools to acquire digital business knowledge. Our 1Q15 research collection focuses on how and why CIOs and business leaders should prize human dimensions of this digital business knowledge. Digital business permits people who don't know what they want to get what they need — when, where and how they need it.

Research Highlights

Digital humanism is a digital system design philosophy centered on human interests and values. The following research spotlights how digital humanism fits in the overall business. It helps CIOs and business leaders build and enable business outcomes in digital business.

The following research defines the key issues around digital humanism and reveals its keys to success.

CIOs can exploit new opportunities in digital business and the digital workplace. To do so, they need to follow a human-centric design philosophy, as detailed in "Digital Humanism Is a Key to Digital Success."

Digital humanism is a digital system design philosophy focused on human interests and values. "How to Apply Gartner's Digital Humanism Manifesto" can help CIOs and business managers lead digital business initiatives by establishing shared principles.

Digital humanism relies on the appropriate enterprise culture. The following research examines how and when to change culture toward digital humanist ends.

"Digital Humanism Requires an Agile Culture" details the switch from digital machinism to digital humanism — the first true tectonic shift of the digital age. To survive, IT organizations will require a vastly different culture than they have today.

"Culture Change Is Easier Than You Think" discusses how, when CIOs are asked, culture change is the excuse often given for why enterprise transformations fail. This leads to the notion that culture change itself is hard. But what if it was easy — dangerously easy?

For CIOs tackling culture change, knowing what to change is often more difficult than executing the changes. "Knowing What to Change Is the Hard Part of Culture Change" can help CIOs overcome this challenge.

Application leaders supporting CRM must know when to automate and when to allow for human intervention to deliver a positive customer experience. "Use These Five Steps to Achieve a Digitally Humanist CRM Automation Strategy" reviews best practices for applying a digital humanist approach to CRM.

Application leaders who empower salespeople using digital technology will offer new opportunities to improve sales execution processes. "Principles for the Future of CRM for Sales" explains how application leaders and sales managers can leverage the digital humanist manifesto.

The following research outlines key steps to build transformational change.

Journey maps are used to model customer experience and drive digital business strategy. These maps help organizations understand how they can fulfill business outcomes with customer experiences led by defined values. "Toolkit: How EA Enables Digital Humanism via Business Outcomes Journey Maps to Exploit Digital Disruptions" helps EA practitioners educate themselves on why a business outcomes journey map can be a valuable diagnostic deliverable for their EA practices.

Business transformation leaders require strong organizational change skills to succeed. But how do they master those skills? Use "Three Essential First Steps for Leading Transformational Change" as a guide to build a reusable enterprise change capability.

Change fatigue will drain employees of their ability to embrace change and undermine anticipated benefits realized for transformation initiatives. "Eight Steps to Stem Change Fatigue Associated With Business Transformation" provides business leaders with a framework to identify and combat change fatigue.

As nonroutine cognitive processes increase, application leaders should adopt a digital humanist approach to building systems that create value for the modern digital workplace. "Re-engineering the Digital Workplace: Don't Automate, Facilitate" can help application leaders achieve this goal.

Brain-aware enterprises consider the needs of the human brain to develop work environments that optimize performance. Business transformation can introduce new brain-aware work models, as detailed in "Designing Processes for the Brain-Aware Enterprise," that help keep employees happier and more productive.

When it comes to the personality of bimodal IT, Mode 1 requires reliability and Mode 2 requires agility and innovation. CIOs can shape expectations and mindsets so that personality differences are not the primary driver of Mode 2 success. "The Personality of Bimodal IT: Nurture Is Stronger Than Nature" explains how CIOs and technology leaders can develop Mode 2 capabilities.

Top-down organizational change mandates won't deliver results in the world of digital business. Organizational liquidity, as described in "Organizational Liquidity Readies Enterprises for Digital Business," arms employees with the ability to capitalize on business moments. CIOs and business leaders should use it for a competitive advantage that competitors can't replicate.

The following research details how CIOs and business leaders can implement the human aspect in an ethical manner.

The scandals and societal debate around intended and unintended ethical consequences of use of digital technology requires CIOs, IT professionals, boards of directors and investors to regard digital ethics as part of digital risk and digital business. "Digital Ethics, Or How to Not Mess Up With Technology" describes the scope of digital ethics.

Organizations must be able to trust their smart machines as tools to help the organization. CIOs must ensure that smart machines behave ethically to earn that trust. "Create Smart Machines With Ethics in Their 'Minds'" provides recommendations to that end.

Gartner Recommended Reading

Some documents may not be available as part of your current Gartner subscription.

"Putting Digital Business to Work in 2015"

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