

2022 Digital World Predictions

By Deborah M. Collier



The year 2022, requires a focus on human-connectedness and experience, and good governance as we alternate between virtual and face-to-face living and working seamlessly.

Futurist Leader Deborah Collier, President of Digital Skills Authority, investigates and delivers her digital world predictions and advice for 2022.

In 2022, uncertainty poses our greatest challenge and refocuses our attention on agility, innovation and stability. Economic recovery remains on a distant horizon, while smooth sailing and gaining the competitive edge are high on the agenda of businesses and other organisations.

What will our journey to 2022 look like? What are the challenges and opportunities in 2022? Let's explore the challenges and opportunities in my predictions for 2022 and beyond, and consider how they might help you:

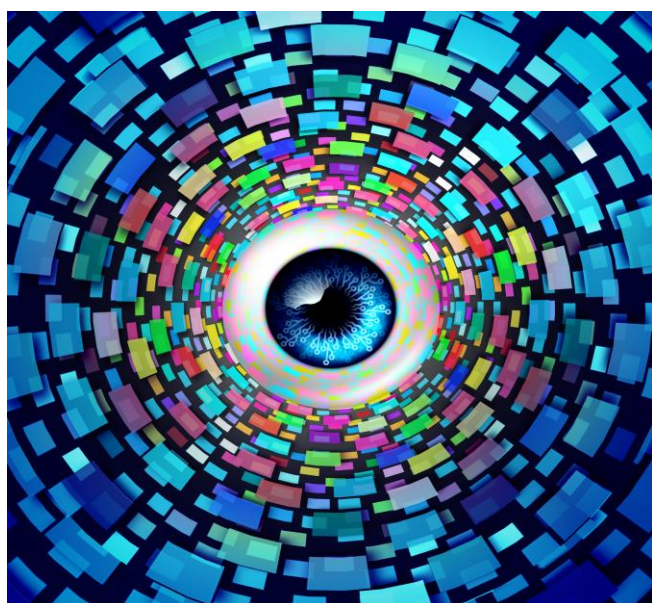
1) Digital Governance Fast Forward

This decade has ignited a number of evolving digital services and products. Digital and e-business history is already testament to the need for effective governance alongside innovation. However, it often takes years for governments to respond with legislation, while organisations set their own policies or continue without risk management – often at their own peril. Ethics of course are essential in effective and reputable policy-making, but are not always deployed. Diligent and impacting digital governance is essential for 'Central Bank Digital Currency', data and processing, AI, infrastructure and deployment, as well a digital business. While the protection and processing of data is largely regulated around the globe, there is currently no governance for blockchain (a technology providing unique identification of records). Regulations for cryptocurrency (which is enabled by blockchain) are in their infancy and evolving around the globe. While regulations to fight fraud are a primary area of digital governance, another more human element has come to the forefront. Regulations to protect against online harms, have been evolving for some years, but not swiftly enough. With further pressure on the social networks to manage content responsibly or have legal liability, employees are also taking liability and their own protection more seriously. According to a recent article by BBC News, a TikTok moderator has been sued "over psychological trauma due to the requirement to watch and moderate extreme and graphic violence for up to 12-hrs a day." With the volume of content posted online, Artificial Intelligence has to be the first mechanism for moderation. If we are to avoid psychological harms to humans, we need more intelligent Artificial Intelligence to moderate and block harmful content, before humans moderate a smaller selection further with limited exposure, combined perhaps with more joyful work. 'Content Moderator + X' could be a hybrid role of the future.

2) Human-Centric Strategy

Positive communications are vital, but audience is everything. In 2022, enhanced human-centric strategies will be engrained throughout marketing, communications, product and services development and delivery whether these be commercial or governmental. As we navigate the virtual world more confidently, blending real-world with online, industry and government organisations explore how to leverage technology and maximize automation, while balancing and refocusing attention on human interaction, audience engagement and customer experience. Bringing digital into the real-world, rather than focusing entirely on immersing us in the digital world, creating that perfect balance and harmony, missed by so many during the pandemic, will be an exciting challenge. A combination of media, social media and the pandemic has caused an acceleration inhumanity. In response to this evolution, human skills such as empathy, cognition and cultural awareness come to the forefront. In addition, promoting positive psychology for both customers and employees will be a productive ingredient of 2022 and beyond.

Colliding Worlds – Digital Merges Reality



In 2021 Meta and Microsoft announced their plans for the Metaverse or Metaverses which are likely to take several years to fully develop and will invite global collaboration and contribution. Anyone with the means, know-how and desire can participate in the Metaverse, either as a developer, brand or individual. In the meantime gaining the competitive edge in 2022 and beyond involves developing and delivering audience journeys that are ‘experiential on steroids’. Commercial and creative focus are about bringing real objects into the virtual world and virtual objects into the real world. A brand offering a personalized product with accompanying original digital design in the form of an NFT (non-fungible token), is one commercial possibility.

As mobile and wearable devices for augmented reality become more accessible with new products launching,

these technologies deliver far reaching opportunities for entertainment, leisure, shopping, education, and other information sharing and consumption. Multi-sensory essentials such as smell, taste and touch (haptic) are still in their infancy. Proprioception (kinaesthesias), the ability to sense movement, action or location is a vital ongoing area of research, which in the future, will have a powerful impact on entertainment, leisure and education. In the meantime, spatial awareness technologies such as LiDAR, used for visualising store products in your home, or seeing the complete anatomy in a medical lecture, for example, are more quickly advancing and in commercial use.

4) Banks Embrace Digital Currency

The acceptance and use of cryptocurrency has accelerated during the pandemic, and with that the banks motivation to innovate and embrace digital currency rather than fight against the tide. Cryptocurrency is designed to be decentralized and anonymous, which is attractive to those fearing too much power and surveillance by governments on citizens spending, similar to the way tech giants mine user’s data. Central Banks such as ‘Bank of England’ and ‘Banco De Mexico’, are planning their own Central Bank Digital currency. China has already launched its own CBDC, and ‘Bank of Jamaica’ will be launching their own CBD later this year after a successful pilot in 2021. The impacts are far reaching both economically and for humanity. What would make a CBDC different to card and digital payments already in existence? CBDC will make payments faster with immediate settlements, and could make payment processing and transaction fees cheaper, while there is also a focus on encouraging innovation and increasing efficiency. Maintaining currency sovereignty, legal and

regulatory safeguards such as payment tracking for anti-money laundering and terrorism , are also drivers for central banks own digital currency, which can be distributed through commercial banks without causing too much disruption. CBDC's could enable financial inclusion for the 1.7-billion adults around the globe who are without a bank account, either through digital wallets, or legislation to ensure everyone has a bank account of some sort.

Through monetary policy committees and strong economic governance, financial stability, cyber resilience and energy efficiency will be achieved, CBDC can complement traditional currency and co-exist with commercial bank money and bank notes, without harming the economy, banking or citizens. Choice will as always be key for global citizens in 2022 and beyond.

5) E-Commerce Businesses Move Home

During the pandemic, e-commerce has been a lifeline for many businesses and indeed new ventures have launched. However, key challenges with distribution, taxation and import and exports are still prevalent, if not crippling in many parts of the world, with a heavy impact on sales in some countries as a result. The United Kingdom, a world leader in e-commerce has been heavily impacted by Brexit, and taxation in and with Europe has become unnecessarily complex, particularly with digital products. Tax rulings for each territory dependent on whether the sale is to a business or a consumer, have also become unworkable for many businesses without the ability and desire to register for VAT in every country sold to, or the investment for e-commerce systems that auto-calculate the relevant sales tax. These over complex rulings designed to add fairness with taxation exclude many SMEs. In 2022 and beyond, if governments do not address their sales taxation rules and trade agreements effectively, businesses who wish to sell further than domestically, will need to consider the viability of running an e-commerce or Internet business in their own country.

2022 is a year for ensuring stability and remaining agile to change while exploring innovation. The lessons we have learned throughout the pandemic can be assessed and deployed throughout the forthcoming year. It is let time to let go of the past and start rebuilding for the future, with regenerated or new business models entirely.

Further reading

- [Digital Skills Authority](#)
- [The Certificate in Online Business](#)
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