

Future technology in our connected world

Panel of experts discuss the future of technology at roundtable debate, hosted by Relish broadband

- Landline telephone, live TV and screens will become obsolete within 10 years
- Rise of wearable technology is to overtake our need for devices
- Generation of digital natives will transform the office and business infrastructure as we know it
- The counter-cultural 'maker movement' will revolutionise our approach to technology and the way we work
- Panel included government advisors, industry experts and futurologists



London, 13th Feb 2015: The QWERTY keyboard, mobile and landline telephones, live TV and screens as we know them will fall victim to technological evolution within the next ten years, revolutionising the way we work and live. This is according to a roundtable of technology experts, brought together by Relish broadband to discuss the future of technology last week.

The “**Future communications in our connected world**” roundtable debate, hosted by Relish, London’s wireless broadband provider, gathered industry experts, government advisors and futurologists to explore how communication technology will change and what the future looks like for consumers and businesses.

Tristan Wilkinson, an Associate at Digital Citizens, argued the social amplification of technology has had the most profound effect on both consumers and businesses: *“For the first time in 20 years we have seen URL registration decrease as social media continues to dominate the landscape.”*

Tushar Agarwal, Co-Founder of Hubble, an office space matchmaking site set up by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs, predicted the end of the mobile phone: *“Mobile phones won’t exist by 2025. As seen in the Spike Jonze film ‘Her’, they’ll be replaced by small wearable devices, such as smartwatches, which will be integrated into our working and personal lives as everything is stored in the cloud.”*

This decline in devices will be the result of the rise in wearables and technology that merges into our surroundings, with screens becoming integrated into surfaces.

Exploring the wider implications this will have on the home and working environments, the panel argued that the office environment and business infrastructure will be completely transformed as a result.

Tristan Wilkinson, an Associate at Digital Citizens explains: *“Expectations have changed as we’re seeing the first generation of tech natives in their early 20s, who were born with broadband, hit the workplace and they’re finding it to be very sterile.”*

The concept of a central office is breaking down and people want flexibility. Work is becoming something you do, not somewhere you go.

Agreeing that the end of the office as we know it could soon be nigh, **Paul Dolman-Darrall, founder of online gaming consultancy Gamevy**, explains: *“The office as we know it is a relatively new, 20th century, concept. We all adapted to the miserable cubicle-based hell of the 80s then we moved to open-plan offices which are great for teamwork but not so good for concentration. Now we’re getting used to the idea that workers don’t necessarily need to be sat at the same desk all day.”*

The nature of the office is being directly influenced by the success of smaller start-up ventures, at the cost of larger corporations.

Laura Kirsop, Head of Code Club UK - a nationwide network of free volunteer-led after-school coding clubs for children - explains further: *“The counter-cultural ‘maker movement’ in which individuals are designing and producing hardware and software thanks to low cost materials, has the potential to revolutionise our approach to technology and the way we work.”*

Applied Futurist Tom Cheesewright agrees, commenting: *“The maker movement has already changed the face of the consumer electronics industry and will continue to do so. The real innovation in the fledgling wearable industry is coming from crowdsourced projects rather than big corporations.”*

However, though working spaces and hours become more variable to suit the task in hand, face-to-face interaction is still important, as is the need to recognise that home-working isn’t for everyone.

Samira Gazzane, Policy Manager, Broadband Stakeholder Group explains: *“We need to address the negative social impact of working from home. Not everyone wants to bring their work home with them, especially if they have children at home.”*

Despite this, technological evolution is an infamously slow process. The QWERTY keyboard was designed in 1868 and the landline was invented shortly after in 1876 – which although rarely used, is still required for access to the internet.

Colm Sheehy, Senior Economist for Economics and Business Research argues: *“Having a wired phone in your house is completely pointless. It’s amazing how far behind we are - technology has advanced but we’re still living in the 90s in terms of infrastructure.”*

The prospects of an advancing technological landscape are exciting, both in terms of future gadgets and the business infrastructure.

Will Harnden, Chief Marketing Officer at Relish concludes: *“Technological advances will ultimately transform the way we work and live, and blur lines between the two.*

“We’re moving into a world where people’s lives are less compartmentalised. Rather than spending all day sat at the same desk, the office of the future is all about not being prescriptive and sticking to conventional methods of working for the sake of it.

“Holding on to old technology, like the landline, is only holding us back.”



For more information on Relish, the wireless broadband that functions without the need for a landline, go to www.relish.net.

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For further information, quotes and background information on the roundtable, please contact: relish@wcommunications.co.uk

Panellists at the roundtable included:

- **Colm Sheehy:** Senior Economist, Centre of Economics and Business Research
- **Jenny Walton:** Head of Communication services, Media Trust
- **Laura Kirsop:** Head of Code Club UK
- **Lucy Lyall-Grant:** Trainer at Freeformers
- **Paul Dolman-Darrall:** Chairman of Gamevy
- **Samira Gazzane:** Policy Manager at Broadband UK
- **Skye Macleod:** Programme Manager at Tech UK
- **Tom Cheesewright:** Applied Futurist and media commentator
- **Tristan Wilkinson:** Associate at Digital Citizens
- **Tushar Agarwal:** Co-Founder of Hubble
- **Martin Stanford:** Sky News presenter

About Relish:

Relish is a new communications provider for Central London. We know London's people and businesses are always busy and on the move, so our services help them get online quickly and easily, without any hassle.

Our exclusive 4G and wireless networks mean that you can get online without needing to wait for a broadband installation guy, long contracts or unwanted landlines.

From our home and business broadband services through to our Dedicated Business Internet, if you're in need of fast internet without the kerfuffle, we've got you covered. Plus our Pocket Hub puts a Wi-Fi hotspot in your pocket when you're out and about.

Relish. Broadband without the wires.

About UK Broadband

UK Broadband switched on the first 4G LTE system for commercial services in the UK, in February 2012, in London. We now provide 4G LTE services in a number of cities, towns and commercial campuses in the UK.

Additionally, UK Broadband provides other wireless data capacity, services and solutions to commercial enterprises, public sector organisations and channel partners throughout the UK.

Relish is operated by UK Broadband, part of the PCCW Group that includes HKT, Hong Kong's premier telecommunications service provider and largest mobile service operator.