

Building a connected, intelligent world

ICTs are having a massive impact on the world, and profoundly affecting individuals and organisations alike. Advances in technology such as the Internet of things, the cloud and artificial intelligence (AI), are bringing new and exciting experiences, driving greater efficiencies, and benefiting every industry from financial services to healthcare, as well as societies as a whole.



However, not all the earth's citizens are able to reap the benefits that these technologies, says Fred Saayman, Huawei Business Unit: Executive at Pinnacle.

"While smartphones and the internet have changed the way we communicate forever, and have added unimaginable value to our lives, many people do not have access to these, and are being denied not only entertainment but crucial services too."

Saayman says currently, there are some 3.8 billion smartphones in use around the globe, although there are still 5 billion individuals who don't own or have access to these devices, and another 4 billion who have no access to mobile networks.

"In addition, 40% of people who do have access to mobile networks do not have access to mobile broadband. And while there are many nations where mobile consumption per user each day might reach between 10 and 20 gigabytes, the global average is a mere 0.03 gigabytes, which is woefully inadequate and can't hope to meet the needs of everyday life."

Innovative technologies not being use yet

There is also a slew of innovative technologies, including virtual reality, wearables, connected cars, intelligent automation, that are not being widely used as yet. According to Huawei research, there will be more than 8 billion smartphones being used by the year 2025.

Moreover, the telecoms giant forecasts that the number of mobile users will exceed 6.5 billion, and 80% of these users will have mobile broadband. Huawei's research also indicated that there will be around 440 million users of augmented and virtual reality, and when it comes to cars, around 40% will be connected.

Saayman looks at some of the ways connectivity can benefit citizens and businesses alike.

"Having home networks and broadband at home enables individuals to interact more effectively with their friends and families, as well as have access to a better education, as a world on online learning will open up them. For businesses, digital technologies can help them reap the benefits of the latest technologies, which in turn helps to speed up innovation and boost efficiencies."

However, he says currently, a vast number of businesses around the world are still not realising the benefits of these solutions.

"There are several reasons for this. Firstly, network infrastructure has not been developed evenly around the world. According to Huawei, a staggering 90% of enterprises have private lines that are slower than 10 Mbps, which isn't nearly enough speed to support digital and cloud services."

Furthermore, Saayman says a huge number of businesses have office networks only, and have not connected their production networks, products, and customers, and are way behind when it comes to implementing digital production and smart manufacturing or even making use of digital technologies to improve their sales, marketing and customer service.

Undeveloped areas

Another area that he says is unevenly developed, is IT infrastructure, as Huawei's research shows that under 10% of enterprise applications reside in the cloud and a mere 13% of data is properly used. "If data is unused, it offers no value or insight to the business, and instead adds to the expense as it still needs to be stored somewhere. AI is also being underutilised, with only 5% of businesses having played around with this game-changing technology."

On the plus side, Saayman says Huawei estimates that this will change by 2025, as most enterprises will go through a major shift when it comes to digital adoption. "They estimate that 85% of enterprise applications will be cloud-based, and 80% of data utilised. Encouragingly, a whopping 86% of organisations will have experimented with AI on some level."

Because ICTs and digital technologies are having such a massive impact on our lives in general, and redefining the way we live and work, businesses need to find ways to bring digital into every household and every business, to create a truly connected, intelligent world.

He says Huawei, through its partners, is positioning itself as a pioneer of the intelligent world. "Its plans include focusing more efforts on creating more ICT infrastructure and increasing the quantity of smart devices, to ensure that every citizen has a smartphone that is capable of linking all of their smart devices together."

"In a truly connected and intelligent world, businesses will be able to become increasingly innovative. Organisations will have the ability to deliver truly scalable, customisable solutions, tailored to meet specific user needs. Governments will have

better and smarter solutions to improve the lives of their citizens, and make their cities more secure and efficient.”

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