

2022 tech predictions: Smart glasses, drone delivery services, and more

By  Ronald Ravel

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Predicting the future is hard. Predicting the future in tech is even harder, and a completely imperfect exercise due to how rapidly things progress, challenges to innovation and the unpredictability of consumer trends. While only a small fraction of innovations truly disrupt the status quo, oftentimes this can be due to them being ahead of their time, or the market not yet existing. However, based on the current activity we see across enterprise and consumer behaviour, we can attempt to make some predictions on where technologies will head in the next year.



Source: [Unsplash](#)

2022 will be the year of critical mass for mobile edge computing and smart glasses

According to [IBM](#), 91% of businesses plan to implement edge computing strategies within the next five years.

In industries such as manufacturing, this will increasingly become the norm as products such as assisted reality (AR) smart glasses, will be key to enabling field workers to work anywhere without having access to a Wi-Fi network. But putting AR to work is extremely complex.

To realistically present an enhanced version of a user's surroundings, smart glasses have to comprehend multiple sets of data and react in real-time – which is difficult if every step requires sending data off the device for processing. Remember that delays can be life-threatening: consider the use of smart glasses in healthcare for example.



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This is why edge computing is poised to grow: it enables smart devices to react to environments immediately and accurately, and in turn, makes them more usable across a wide range of applications. [Our own research](#) found that 63% of organisations plan to deploy smart glasses within the next 24 months, and in 2022, we believe businesses will formalise their ideas to implement these technologies.

Securing a hybrid work environment will be essential

The pandemic has changed working environments forever, but hybrid working is not without its risks. Understandably, it has propelled businesses to regularly evaluate their security processes to protect their employee's data. One area where this will really gain attention is device security.

Our research found that 81% of IT decision-makers ranked security features as important when it comes to purchasing decisions around new devices – and this will continue to be the case for as long as workers are taking these devices home.



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Companies will need to provide staff with secure devices which include features such as two-factor authentication, Windows 11, and Trusted Platform Module to ensure that working from home is as secure as being in the office. In 2022, we will see businesses tighten security measures like these further, by introducing more mobile-secure client solutions too.

Edge AI will enhance customer experiences

Edge computing has already witnessed a significant interest since the introduction of 5G. A 2021 [report](#) by the Linux Foundation predicts that the global market capitalisation of edge computing infrastructure will be worth more than \$800bn by 2028. At the same time, enterprises are also looking to invest in AI in at least some of their business functions.

In 2022, this will be about more than just digital transformation – by fusing edge computing and AI, applications such as remote assistance and assembly line monitoring will become increasingly accessible. And as consumers make more purchasing decisions online, edge AI, through analytics, will come to the fore in understanding consumer trends, purchasing and decision patterns, by providing instant insights to enable real-time business decisions.



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In the second half of 2022, we may even see some larger businesses piloting cameras optimised with Edge AI to identify consumers age groups and target personalised advertising to them. While there will undoubtedly be security issues to iron out with such applications, the growth of edge AI doesn't look like it's about to slow anytime soon.

Drone delivery services will take off in logistics

The pandemic memorably put pressure on supply chains all over the world, and logistics companies needed technologies like automation and robotics, to help pick, pack and dispatch ever-increasing amounts of orders. Both of these technologies will continue to play a major role in this space as we go into 2022.

Drone delivery services were ahead of their time five years ago, which is a large part of the reason that Amazon's Prime Air plans are currently [on the rocks](#). But recent predictions say the tide is about to change: the global [warehouse robotics market size](#) is expected to grow from \$4.7bn in 2021 to \$9.1bn by 2026. As this technology starts to find its feet, we expect to see more conversations around drone delivery services in the next 12 months.

2022 will be the year of the recycled laptop

It wouldn't be a predictions piece without some mention of sustainability, and we think that 2022 will be the year of the recycled laptop. With device fleets being updated more frequently since March 2020, there is a growing concern about the damaging impact this could have on the environment, and businesses are being pressured to act.

According to E-Waste, 97% of global enterprises had to purchase new laptops to accommodate the shift to remote working during the pandemic. Next year, businesses will be looking to make smart and sustainable choices in a number of ways – especially if they want to meet the COP26 commitments.

One of the 'easy wins' will be to start ethically disposing of old devices through initiatives such as reselling and recycling. We hope to see more companies adopt these initiatives, and as we progress through the decade, we are confident that businesses will find the best and most sustainable way to reduce their carbon footprint and make hybrid working work for everyone.

ABOUT RONALD RAVEL

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