

# Becoming digital

 By Jessie Rudd

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2016 was a year that can be characterised less by technological innovations and more about businesses embracing the digital revolution. The likes of information security, mobile, cloud technologies, and the Internet of Things (IoT) took centre stage as it fully, and finally, entered mainstream business in South Africa.



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Irrespective of which technologies are being implemented though, a core standard should remain – ensuring that all information, no matter the source, is secure. With data becoming the currency of the digital world, companies have to take significant steps to refine their organisational strategies, with a fundamental focus being the protection of information assets – and 2017 should be no different.

Despite the opportunities that mobile and cloud provide, if focus is not placed on securing these platforms, then organisations stand to lose significantly – whether that loss comes from reputational damage or financial damage. Truth is, we are hurtling at breakneck speed towards a reality in which data will equate to power, and securing it will become the highest priority for business users and consumers' alike.

## Mobility

One of the biggest current business drivers that will continue into 2017 is that of mobility. Companies need to cater to the always-on-demand requirements that mobile users have come to expect. People are using apps more than ever to access virtually every aspect of their lives.

If a business does not have some sort of app integration, then it risks losing relevance to an entire generation of potential customers. There is no doubt either, that this trend will only continue as devices and bandwidth become more affordable in South Africa and the rest of the continent.

## Cloud-based solutions

Another element driven by mobility is cloud-based solutions. What used to be something that only the most future-forward companies were implementing two years ago, has become an integral business decision. Services and solutions, by the

very nature of what they are and the world we currently live in, have to become more cloud-friendly and enabled.

This is putting pressure on organisations to ensure that their offering is designed in such a way that it can embrace the benefits of the cloud. Ultimately, these business solutions contribute to making on-the-go decision-making much more accurate and faster.

## IoT

Another significant trend is that of IoT. With the online accessibility of data, the world has reached a tipping point where IoT and the related devices will unlock significant business and consumer potential in the future.

The time is fast approaching where every electronic device will be connected to the internet in some way – continually logging and recording data. More data than our human mind can fathom. This means that security (and the privacy of our data) will need to be continually re-evaluated in the context of an entirely connected world.

## Augmented technology

Finally, 2017 will be an exciting year for augmented technology. In fact, this could be the next game changer of our era. Accurate and relevant information, readily available, right in front of us, will no doubt change the world. In the face of this kind of influx of information, businesses are going to have to evolve and adapt like never before.

While the possibilities are endless, you have to ask yourself: do we as humans have the capacity to process all of it? There is no doubt in my mind that we are rapidly approaching a time where we will no longer be limited by technology, but instead by our own imaginations.

## ABOUT JESSIE RUDD

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