

Top IT trends to look out for in 2016

By [Paul Conradie](#)

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2016 will be an exciting and fast-paced year for IT. Technologies that gained a foothold in 2015 are reaching critical mass and gaining the momentum needed to drive them squarely into the mainstream. It's no longer a question of whether, but rather when things like the cloud, big data centres, hyper-convergence, the Internet of Things (IoT), smart devices, cyber security, and the bring your own device (BYOD) trend.



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Forecast: sunny with guaranteed cloud cover

The cloud's rise to prominence is a significant step forward for IT, and one that is driving a tidal wave of change in this industry. Not since the advent of the internet has anything had such a huge impact on the way companies do business.

As much as it's facilitating data access, giving companies 24/7 access to a 360-degree view of their business, it's also reducing capital expenditure on depreciating IT assets. At the same time, it's driving increasing amounts of big data and the big data centres which that necessitates, and fuelling IoT and the BYOD trend.

Big data and bid data centres are big news

Certainly the cloud is one of the principal drivers of the massive volumes of data being generated and driven into and through IT systems, and which in turn require big data centres for storage.

The big data centre as we know it is changing however and the 2016-onwards incarnation will be software rather than hardware-defined. In layman's terms this means that instead of the traditional data centre located at a single physical site, the software-defined data centre of the future is abstracted from the hardware which itself may be located in several different locations.

Helping this trend along is hyper-convergence, another buzzword whose star will continue to rise in 2016. Hyper-converged infrastructure that integrates compute, storage, virtualisation resources, networking and other software components are fast gaining ground, and as it does is paving the way for software-defined data centres, among others.

The Internet of Things

In countries like the United States, IoT has already turned science fiction to reality for many consumers. Across the country consumers are using smartphones to remotely lock/unlock exterior doors, turning lights on/off, operate garage doors, check if the refrigerator is open, control temperature, detect smoke or leaking water, and view the interior and exterior of their homes via linked smart devices.

That's a great starting point, but what happens next will be way more exciting as vendors continue working to create solutions that will deliver on the business proposition of IoT.



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Pervasive consumer devices

Yes, the desktop market will continue to shrink, but in 2016, we'll see the smart device market continue to explode. Purists maintain that ultimately all consumer smart devices - tablets, phones, watches, etc. - will consolidate into a single "uber-device," but I'm inclined to agree with those who believe the average person will have at least five connected devices in the next few years.

Cyber security

On a sobering note, security threats are on the rise and range from cyber espionage to network infiltrations. The remedy for this is more pervasive and all-inclusive cyber security solutions. The trend that's gaining the most momentum is the approach that secures from the device through the network and into the data centre. Not surprisingly, in the wake of this growing threat, we are seeing a concomitant explosion in the field of cyber security as a service and a profession.

Mobility remains key

BYOD is not new, but I expect this trend will continue apace in 2016. The real story in BYOD lies in the significant growth we can expect in management tools to support and manage how these mobile devices engage and interact with business processes. Keep an eye on this space.

In summary, the eventual outcome of these exciting developments will be to irrevocably change the face of IT as we know it. I believe that while hardware, across the board, will continue to get smaller, smarter and more distributed, you should expect to hear less and less about it and more about the software, processes and services it enables in conjunction with the cloud.

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