

# Digital Business

**NEW FOR DECEMBER:** A fresh approach that gets to the heart of business's technology needs. More space is devoted to our 'definitive' articles on the use, management, and investment in today's technology, plus thought leadership on best practice and IT that will shape tomorrow's organisations. Featured in this issue:

- **The next big thing...is there going to be one?**
- **Investing in IT can save the day**
- **Printing – from managed printing services to 3-D**
- **Does IT work? Can IT keep track of a mobile workforce?**
- **First Ade: Demystification and practical advice from Ade McCormack – plus readers' contributions**
- **Can You Believe IT? A look ahead to future technology that will change business**
- **What's New: Latest products and services from the vendors**
- **My Ideas: a senior business figure's thoughts on IT**
- **Perspectives: Alan Cane puts IT in the wider context**
- **View from the Valley: Chris Nuttall on the latest thinking**

The Financial Times proposes to publish the following FT Report on December 10 2009. Deadline for completion of articles: November 25 2009.

*We plan to include the following features (please note that this list is provisional):*

**To receive news of updates to our schedule, send your e-mail address to [digitalbusiness@ft.com](mailto:digitalbusiness@ft.com), with "UPDATE REQUEST" in the subject field.**

## **Feature**

### **The next big thing – is there going to be one?**

It's sometimes tempting to say: "IT will be fantastic when it's finally built and all finished." But this isn't how it works: technology will never be "finished". However, this age of anarchy, with technology still in its relative infancy, will surely settle down as best practices emerge and standardisation takes hold. What makes this more likely to happen is the lack of genuine big breakthroughs on the horizon.

In fact, there hasn't been an earth-shattering technological breakthrough for many years. What was the last one – the internet? The laptop or mobile phone?

Businesses and individuals might feel they are using cutting edge technology, whereas in fact it might be half a century old. It's changed and evolved, of course, and existing technologies have been combined to produce something that looks new – but very little is genuinely new.

This feature will look back at "the last big things"; the current process of evolution and development; and will look forward to speculate on where "the next big thing" might come from. **1,400 words, Alan Cane**

### **Sidebar: NEW REGULAR FEATURE – Can You Believe IT?**

A new series focusing on a new piece of surprising technology that could one day change the way businesses operate – or even the world. **Joia Shillingford, 600 words**

### **Feature**

#### **IT investment is saving the day...**

"The economy's taking a nosedive – cut the IT budget and stop some of those new projects. We'll have to make do and mend till things pick up."

This is one approach to adapting to changing conditions – but is it the right one? Recent research by the London School of Economics suggests exactly the opposite strategy is likely to work far better when the upturn begins to be felt. The study found that businesses which do not lower their IT investment significantly are better positioned to make it through the tough times and will be better equipped to thrive during the upturn. It reported that 60 per cent of the companies involved said investment in new technology drives business performance and 64 per cent recognised that IT investment could drive down costs in other parts of the business.

IT innovation is a significant factor – especially its ability to lower costs in other parts of the business.

This feature will look at how investing in IT can bring lower costs, which areas benefit most, and will seek a range of views on best practice. **1,400 words, Stephen Pritchard**

### **Feature**

#### **Printing and printers**

Printers can be delicate machines, in need of regular replenishing with both paper and ink, and occasionally opening up and fixing when they jam. Occasionally, the problem might require a printer engineer – and these specialists are rarely to be found in even the largest organisations. All this makes printing a ripe subject for outsourcing or provision as a service.

This feature will weigh up the pros and cons of in-house printing management versus managed print services.

It will also remind businesses of the dangers posed by printer security – most printers have easily removable hard drives that store recent documents and networked printers can be easy to hack into. More obviously, it will highlight the dangers of uncollected confidential documents left on printers and what can be done about it.

**1,400 words, Jessica Twentyman**

### **Sidebar: 3-D printing**

Press Control + P and a piece of paper will appear from a printer carrying a representation of what was on the computer screen. But next generation printers can do much more. Looking like a large microwave oven, a 3-D printer can create a model of an object from digital instructions – press Control + P and it initiates a process that builds something that can be picked up, examined and played with. Such printers already exist, enabling members of widely distributed design teams to review and revise prototypes quickly and cheaply.

This feature will look at what these machines can do, the uses they have and the benefits they bring. **800 words, Jessica Twentyman**

### **Issues for Business**

#### **Does IT work?**

In this issue: **Where are they? Keeping track of a mobile workforce**

Increasing mobility, enabled through a range of devices and high speed wireless networks, brings big benefits to business – but poses some challenges. We look at real-time mobility solutions that keep track of where people are and what they are working on. **950 words, Stephen Pritchard**

#### **NEW REGULAR FEATURE – First Ade (working title)**

What can your business do to be better at IT? **Ade McCormack** begins a new regular feature that demystifies technology and offers easily digestible and practical guidance on how it can best be used. His rolling list of topics will include security, being green, mobility, and web strategy.

**Plus - tips from readers. We'll be inviting readers to share their experience by sending us their own ideas, which will be posted at [www.ft.com/digitalbusiness](http://www.ft.com/digitalbusiness), with the best being used in the print edition.**

#### **What's New: Launches and Updates Digest**

Keeping general business abreast of the most interesting products and services. A selection of highlights to keep opinion-formers informed about the technology industry's output. **Geoff Nairn**

**NB: A new edition of Geoff Nairn's What's New round-up appears every Tuesday at [www.ft.com/digitalbusiness](http://www.ft.com/digitalbusiness)**

### **Interviews / Ideas**

#### **My Ideas**

Either: A senior executive or industry expert is interviewed about their relationship with technology; the importance they attach to IT in their business and their sector; how it can differentiate their company or provide it with competitive advantage; and whether their business sees IT as strategic or simply a cost.

Or they put forward their own ideas in their own words. **1,200 words**

## **Perspectives**

**Alan Cane**, our regular columnist, places today's technology in context.

## **Valley View**

**Chris Nuttall**'s column that captures the colour and flavour of life in Silicon Valley.

## **Editorial Information for FT Digital Business**

Background information for articles or themes that have not yet been assigned to individual writers should be sent, by e-mail only please, to [digitalbusiness@ft.com](mailto:digitalbusiness@ft.com) where they will be considered by Peter Whitehead, FT Digital Business editor. Please do not use individual e-mail addresses, fax numbers or post.

Once articles have been assigned (the synopses on the Digital Business pages of FT.com – accessible via 'Looking Ahead' link – will be updated), please send information directly to the writers concerned. Information on writers, and their email addresses, is available via the "Writers and Contacts" link at [www.ft.com/digitalbusiness](http://www.ft.com/digitalbusiness).

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