

# The Future Show Live: Digital Darwinism

The development of exponential technology means that technological change is now impacting the financial industry in a way that was completely impossible only a few years ago. The 'Future Show Live' at Sibos will not only present key trends for the next five years reflecting on exponential change, it will also examine what we need to do in order to have human values reflected in business, thus minimising the risk of turning commerce, life and culture into a giant machine or a set of complex algorithms.

Gerd Leonhard, a global futurist, author, filmmaker and CEO of The Futures Agency, will host 'The Future Show Live', an interactive approach depicting the future we may be heading towards. The key message of 'The Future Show Live' is that big changes are about to impact the financial industries, similar to the waves of disruption that we have seen in the music or publishing industry. These changes will transform the entire value chain of banking and financial services, covering aspects such as how much banks can charge, how long will processes take and how banks will communicate with customers. "Because the financial services industry is very heavily regulated and protected, it has taken much longer," Leonhard explains. "Technology is in the process of creating a new kind of hyper-efficiency for financial services, meaning that banks cannot



This is basically  
a Tesla-moment  
for banking.

get away with what they used to be able to do, such as charging very high fees for relatively simple services or technological services."

Leonhard uses the example of changes to the music industry. Today, it costs €8 per month to access 18 million songs on Spotify, whilst just a few years ago, one song on iTunes would cost €2. Likewise, for the financial industry, it will be possible to charge 90% less than what is charged today for basic financial services transactions. "It is an extreme kind of 'Digital Darwinism'," continues Leonhard. "Digital technology becomes available and as a result everything becomes easier, faster and cheaper, leading consumers to say it is obvious this path has to be followed because everything else would be a waste of time and money."

Leonhard pinpoints numerous areas that could represent real change in financial services with some of the biggest game changers being cognitive computing, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things. It will no longer be simply a matter of a database or computer that does what it is programmed for, but rather dealing with technology that can actually think, watch, talk and re-invent how we do things. Bots and software will be able to give better and quicker advice on simple financial investments compared to a human employee because it is impossible for a human to track 100 million data feeds in real time.

There is, however, an ethical side to all of this - and this is where the challenge lies. Who is going to be in control of the data as everything moves to the cloud? "The risk is that there is currently almost no regulation on data, and that in my view is not a good situation," comments Leonhard. "I do not believe that blockchain-based services and digital money, in general, will really happen until we have solved the problem as to who is actually in charge of all that data in order to provide some kind of social contract, security and overall stewardship."

Because the whole value proposition of the financial services industry is about to change, it needs to reinvent itself in order to discover and grow new values and revenue streams. "In general you can say the financial industry has been asleep at the wheel for the past ten years, but it has woken up with a start," says Leonhard. The 'Future Show Live' will demonstrate what exponential technologies are doing to our world of business and society and will create a context around financial services, pointing people towards how they can innovate from inside an organisation and not rest on outmoded systems. We will need to embrace technology - but not become it. We will need to find ways that technology will actually serve humanity (i.e. support human flourishing and contentment), not vice versa.

Leonhard leaves us with a parting thought: "The Darwinian megashifts of exponential technologies will eventually challenge most of our assumptions, meaning somebody is going to reinvent the way we think about stock markets. After we get the blockchain and a global digital currency, the next step is to revamp the entire logic of the stock market."

## Book signing

28 Sep at 11:15 – Innotribe Stand

**Title** Technology vs. Humanity: The coming clash between man and machine

**Learn more**



Gerd Leonhard will be hosting 'The Future Show Live' on Wednesday 28 September at the Innotribe Stand (G16) from 09:30-10:15.