

The latest technology trends captured at Mobile World Congress in Barcelona offering a wide range of opportunities to Teleplan. Andrew Chandler, Business Development Director Europe gives us his thoughts on the iconic event.

Reflecting on #MWC19

INTOUCH: What were the key technology themes this year at MWC?

Andrew Chandler: The show was mesmerising. Eight enormous halls of noise, colour, technology, presentations and innovation, was almost overwhelming.

I noted an evolution from previous MWC. The smartphone has evolved from a human access device into an incredible menu of services, opportunities and applications – a personal remote controller to unrestrained lifestyle.

I saw countless smartphone brands, many look and feel similar and do similar things – although foldable screen devices do appear to be close to commercial reality, notably Huawei & Samsung.

The most significant aspect of the show however was the pending arrival of 5G infrastructure that enables the potential of IoT and connected world to be realised. 5G enables so many mobile possibilities converging technologies into fully connected mobile world: Security, biometrics, virtual reality, medical applications, payment systems, wearables, robotics, gaming, autonomous vehicles, all reach new levels

of possibility. “Connected World” has to this moment been conceptual – MWC 2019 brings reality that the 5G Digital generation has started!



INTOUCH: You see so many outstanding stands throughout the halls. What stood out to you?

Andrew Chandler: The scale and investment of the big-brand exhibitors was breathtakingly impressive and indicative of the possibilities 5G enables – everyone wants a piece of the future as early adopters.

A particularly interesting “Smart City” platform was exhibited by T-Mobile: their vision of converging the digital revolution with lifestyle - ecological advantage including reduction of city pollution and recycling to clean air. Similar themed representation from NEC with their impressive Digital Japan themed stage show.

A very notable presence from major automotive brands promoting the adoption of connected digital world to automotive technology such as telematics, real time diagnostics, navigation, entertainment, vehicle efficiency, service / fleet management...and to those

that may be sceptical about the autonomous vehicle: get used to the reality the driverless vehicle is coming soon.

Another key theme of MWC 2019 focused on Digital Wellness / Health. Innovators have recognised how IoT and virtual reality can be deployed to human wellbeing in the shape of personal trackers, risk prevention, recuperation from trauma events and even surgery.

We saw several futuristic demonstrations of robotics and the adoption of AI and machine learning. Again, the power of 5G networks will speed these technologies from early adopters to wider use in industrial solutions.

Alongside the familiar global brand names, there were hundreds of smaller enterprises, many from China, with entrepreneurial innovations that capture the digital revolution with offerings as diverse as connected children’s toys and surveillance right up to highly sophisticated network solutions. Plenty of discussion around sustainability and circular economy principles buzzing around the halls – and of course personal and data security are a growing theme.



Continued on following page

INTOUCH: Foldable phones are emerging this year (or re-emerging!). What are your thoughts?

Andrew Chandler: There was much talk about the foldable future of smartphone – but with the exception of Samsung and Huawei there were few examples.

Although the Big 2 had devices at the show in the shape of Galaxy and Mate X, access was very limited. There was still a buzz these technologies created giving future users a current sized mobile device that unfolds into double current screen size.

The brands are proclaiming this to be the future of smartphone, despite a starting price tag of ca. 2,000 EUR, which they say will reduce with uptake. The question remains how soon and what the uptake may be, but feeling is the foldable will become as relevant as the introduction of the first ever smartphones.



Huawei Mate X and Samsung Galaxy Note Fold

The increased screen size foldable devices deliver opens the question of convergence with tablet and a whole range of new possibilities for entertainment and business users on the move. It's one of those debates where I initially doubted I would really need or even want one - but now I do, and I doubt I will be alone in my coveting of the next great evolution which foldable clearly will be.

INTOUCH: What technologies could you see Teleplan being involved with in the future?

Andrew Chandler: The arrival of 5G creates a generation of network equipment upgrades as operators and enterprises race to capitalise on the exponential demand connected devices will place on speed, bandwidth, security etc. This could fuel a sharp increase in the Value Recovery vertical as network providers refresh their estates of equipment and capture new markets – the market will become rich with retired hardware that holds residual value which can be unlocked via secondary utilisation. Our core value proposition of data security and VRS can bring value especially given the sustainability strategies becoming so important to Circular Economy principles.

Of course, our traditional reverse supply chain & depot solutions will remain attractive. 5G roll out will drive a proliferation of new hardware devices as consumers and enterprise users are attracted by the future mobile everything. By this I refer not only to smartphones, but wearables, healthcare, security, transport and consumer electronic products –

all high value devices susceptible to damage, so warranty management and repair / supply chain management will remain fundamental to brands.

We already witness and participate in automated test / robotic solutions for a range of IoT devices and had considerable interest in our Mobile Ecosystem Platform at the show. I expect these technologies to continue to be in demand as clients strive to reduce depot costs via remote diagnostic tools, automation, returns avoidance and objective processes that remove human subjectivity.

Our technology solutions embracing AI and machine learning could open great opportunities to help clients improve product efficiency and circularity at the design stage, ultimately reducing field failure and depot events.

As 5G rolls out, and connected devices / IoT proliferate, so will the growth of Cloud services and centralised Data Centres accelerate. That presents a healthy opportunity for our storage solutions, and whilst HDD is a slowly eroding technology, expect demand to be healthy for many years to come. ■