Article

Jan 2022

Digital Twin technology can change how we understand our customers and the experience we give them

Every time we purchase something online, a digital trail is created. Data captured from our browsing history, our buying habits and our social media posts form a digital version of our behaviour. When we interact online, we add data to our unique profile, and this information helps anticipate our future behaviour. This is a very simplistic view of digital twin technology; an online version of us that continues to evolve and change over time.

Digital twin technology is not a new phenomenon – it has been around for longer than we might realise. In its simplest form, a digital twin is a virtual model of an object in the physical world, which simulates real-time performance. It shows where potential issues and risks might be and gives us insight into behaviours.

The range is limitless, it could be anything from a complex virtual model of a human heart to a simple manufacturing process. It's a powerful tool when you think about all the possibilities it presents. In 2021, all the major cloud providers rolled out significant digital twin capabilities, which have been used extensively in the manufacturing and construction industries and Accenture has predicted that they will continue to be a leading technology trend this year.

Digital twins become really exciting in their ability to predict how people want to experience spaces rather than just focusing on how a physical asset or building might react to changes in the environment. Most hotels already use digital cards to access rooms, but digital twin technology can anticipate our needs without us having to lift a finger. For example; automatically knowing when to turn the heating and lighting to our optimal level or delivering a drink to us regardless of where we are. Digital twins have the power to change how we understand our customers and the experience we give them, but they need powerful data to make them work effectively.

Digital twins are not off-the-shelf technology, they require a lot of investment and not just from a financial perspective. The foundation of digital twins is built on data. We all use lots of data, but it is not always accessible, understood, or even captured. So, before we invest in using digital twins, we need to get better at understanding how people, processes, and systems interact with the data we have, whilst assessing our digital maturity.

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