



# 5 Technologies Redefining Future Customer Experience

# Future Vision

No, we don't have a special crystal ball or a DeLorean time-machine<sup>1</sup> to show you the future of how customer experience will be changed by technology. However, we can make educated predictions of what the near future vision is for technologically shaped customer experience. In 2017 a section of the book, *Experience My Brand*<sup>2</sup>, was dedicated to the future of customer experience. Almost three years later many of the technologies cited in the book have had a demonstrable impact on shaping how customers experience products and services of organisations. The ever-changing landscape of customer experience is fuelled by technologies disrupting how consumers find, buy, and use products and services. In this paper we examine five technologies that are likely to have the most significant impact on redefining the customer experience landscape over the next five years.

## 1. 5G

The rollout of 5G technology will provide the platform for many technologies outlined in this paper to become a force of change for how consumers interact with organisations. Customer experience management is inextricably linked to data. 5G networks will enable data to flow at speeds almost twenty times the speeds of 4G networks. Why is this a significant fact? Faster speed of data flows between servers and consumer devices will enable companies to deliver new experiences for consumers based on some cornerstone customer experience values such as lower effort, simplicity and personalisation.

Faster data flows will enable tech companies to also redesign their technologies in a way that leverages cloud computing and reduces the reliance of consumer devices to operate the application. Solutions that currently rely on computer processing speeds of devices will be able to shift the computational grunt required to the cloud. Faster data flows will, therefore, help accelerate sophisticated and code-heavy applications to more consumers by eradicating the barrier of relying on the actual device.

The expectation is that 5G will lead to more sophisticated customer experiences to a much larger group of people in more geographies than previously possible. The possibilities for redefining the customer experience through the use of 5G are extensive. The timeframes for seeing some of these solutions will depend on the rollout of 5G in multiple geographies, mobile 5G devices, and applications that are designed to leverage the fast speeds of 5G. The types of new experiences consumers expect to have will be focused

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.backtothefuture.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://experiencemybrand.com/>

on a higher degree of personalisation of content, more sophisticated artificial intelligence interactions, and less effort and faster ways to complete transactions.

## 2: Integrated Artificial Intelligence

We have already witnessed the rise of chatbots and robotic process automation solutions to enhance the customer experience. While not every implementation has delivered a better customer experience, there is enough momentum in the utilisation of artificial intelligence-powered solutions to expect it to have a significant impact on future customer experiences.

The artificial solutions implemented so far have primarily had a single purpose. The AI solutions currently deployed for consumers, such as Google Assistant or Siri, attempt to answer questions or complete tasks utilising fixed business rules. It would be fair to say that these single-purpose AI solutions are only scratching the surface of what is to come. The next evolutionary step for AI will be the integration of AI into multiple different systems to perform multi-purpose functions from a single application. AI leaders like Google and Amazon are actively acquiring AI companies and building their capability to deliver a multi-purpose AI experience for consumers. The types of solutions we can expect to see that will redefine the customer experience will include ones such as digital twins. What are digital twins? No doubt the term will become more widely used soon but we are talking about a digital AI assistant that is a mirror of a real person. The digital twin will do the heavy-lifting for us by interacting with multiple different devices such as our car, home appliances, and our phone to perform a multitude of tasks we would normally do. This new time-saving and personalised experience will redefine how we do several tasks such as shopping online, booking the car in for a service, or scheduling a doctor's appointment.

Once personal digital assistants are widely adopted by consumers, we would expect a significant overhaul in the online advertising sector. Fewer human eyeballs responding to online advertisements will require new strategies to appeal to digital assistants searching for suitable products and services.

## 3: Real-time Customer Analytics

Data is the foundation for any customer experience program, and real-time customer analytics provide the insights into customer behaviour required to deliver a unique personalised and relevant experiences to consumers. The plethora of data available today from digital interactions provides organisations with the opportunity to harness this data from multiple sources to deliver real-time uniquely

contextual experiences for their customers. The technology underlying customer analytics has evolved considerably thanks to the growth in the data sciences sector. Sophisticated algorithms can now predict customer behaviour with uncanny accuracy. Predictive analytics can deliver a highly personalised experience at every stage of the customer lifecycle. There is, however, a fine line between providing uniquely relevant and engaging customer experiences and manipulating the experience to achieve an outcome that is not always ideal for the customer and not always ethical. The Cambridge Analytica scandal of 2018<sup>3</sup> highlighted how data, algorithms, and an ulterior motive could lead to highly manipulated outcomes. The Cambridge Analytica case has highlighted the importance of regulatory protection of consumer data and its use. Data usage has already become more tightly controlled by newly established regulations, and it would be reasonable to expect that issues around data ownership and use will remain on both consumer and regulatory agendas for some time.

As data speeds increase through the rollout of 5G, we would expect that ethically sourced data and the analysis of this data using AI-powered algorithms will lead to new and highly engaging customer experiences in the future. These digital experiences, when aligned with a company's brand promise, will differentiate the brand in the marketplace and create a unique competitive advantage in the marketplace.

## 4. Augmented Reality

The evolution of augmented reality technology has reached a stage where it is now a valuable tool for organisations to elevate the digital experience for their customers. More organisations are learning about how to use augmented reality to raise engagement levels with their customers. The physical overlay and sharing of objects, locations, and images enables organisations to provide customers with a visual reality of how products and services would look in their world. The makeshift visualisation would offer consumers an immersive no-cost image of a new reality if they were to purchase or use the product or service. Augmented reality can elevate the customer experience at potentially every stage of their journey. At the pre-sales stage it can help remove any doubt for the consumer by providing a “try-before-you-buy” experience. After the purchase, augmented reality can be used to assist consumers on how to properly maintain their product or use it correctly to achieve optimal benefits.

Augmented reality can also be used to gamify loyalty programs. Customers can potentially be asked to identify and collect items in a store for points which could then be used to redeem products and services. The Pokémon style loyalty program can potentially provide customers with an immediate payback

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<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook%E2%80%93Cambridge\\_Analytica\\_data\\_scandal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook%E2%80%93Cambridge_Analytica_data_scandal)

by providing a fun and engaging way to earn points. This approach to loyalty programs can increase participation rates and generate longer-term loyalty from the target audience.

## 5: Blockchain – Token Economy

Blockchain technology has had a checkered history. It has suffered from overly complicated technical explanations of how it works and from cryptocurrency trading. However, blockchain is entering a new stage of evolution. It is now being recognised for its enormous potential in revolutionising how many industries undertake transactions between parties. Many of us already know of its potential to disrupt the financial services industry and the number of banks already in trials with blockchain solutions. The other notable change that has led us to pick blockchain as a game-changer for customer experience is the announcement by Facebook that they will be introducing a cryptocurrency called Libra<sup>4</sup>. The launch in 2020 of Libra is likely to usher a new era for the token economy.

The token economy will see many products and services transacted using tokens instead of fiat currency. Why will this be significant? Fiat money is government regulated, and its value is linked to the specific economic conditions of the issuing country. Fiat money is also subject to bank and exchange fees when transacted from one entity to the other. Tokens, on the other hand, can offer customers several new benefits. Not only can it provide lower banking fees but because it is not representative of a single country it can be utilised to purchase goods and services across multiple geographies more easily. Tokens can also be used to represent any value such as social and well-being. An example of non-monetary use could be to show appreciation to someone by giving them a token. The potential use of tokens is extensive for redefining the customer experience. It can revolutionise how customers buy goods and services and get rewarded for their efforts.

## One Last Thing....

Kinetic can help organisations design and implement their future customer experiences to differentiate themselves in the marketplace.

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Contact us at:

E: [help@kineticconsulting.com.au](mailto:help@kineticconsulting.com.au)

[www.kineticconsulting.com.au](http://www.kineticconsulting.com.au)

UAE: [www.kineticcs.com](http://www.kineticcs.com)

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libra\\_\(cryptocurrency\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libra_(cryptocurrency))