

Preface

It was 1995 when Nicholas Negroponte, in his book “*Being Digital*”, reminding the rapid migration from packaging logistic to the universally accessible transfer of data, predicted “*The change from atoms to bits being irrevocable and unstoppable*”.

These were among the first signals from the scientific community anticipating the dawn of a dramatic, albeit slow-coming, change.

Here we are, around 20 years later, witnessing our businesses and society finally becoming genuinely and exponentially digital, with an astonishing momentum similar to the that with which computers moved into our lives towards the end of the last millennium.

From then on, following Geoffrey Moore’s “*Crossing the Chasm*”, “*Inside the Tornado*”, “*The Gorilla Game*” and “*Living on the Fault Line*”, the digital transformation became a necessary part of the charter of every company.

Today, this evolutionary process is progressing at a speed that was unthinkable until very recently. This is a time of aggressive and virulent transformations, which are affecting not only the Western world, but rather the entire world.

We will therefore briefly describe how this book came into being and how the goal of understanding the galloping digital transformation was developed.

Since 2001, *Finaki*¹ has organized a series of annual CIO community gatherings in Italy, with the intention of giving a “voice” and institutional recognition to the *demand* side of ICT in Italy.

Topics for each event are reviewed and selected by a Program Committee made of C-level participants belonging to leading Italian companies across several industries. *Finaki* is also the co-founder and platform provider for the European CIO Association, a not-for-profit international association which, since 2004, has brought together CIOs of the largest European businesses as well as CIO associations of Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK and Turkey.

¹Finaki is a French company now owned by the *ComeXposium Group*, founded in 1989, pioneer and leader in high level information society focused events and conferences in Europe.

The sustaining pillars of the *Finaki* initiative are vendor independence, seasoned IT and Telecoms professionals combined with strong event management experience, and lastly, a limited number of selected participants, which guarantees the quality of exchanges.

This unique combination is the key to delivering networking opportunities, cross-feedback and open debates in a lively, informative environment to the senior IS executives community across Europe.

The topics covered by 2014, 2015 and 2016 events, respectively:

1. The Digital Revolution: a key opportunity to boost the country's economy
2. CIO: the Digital *Prometheus*. The Digital Connected Community: how to create and improve business in a digital integrated society
3. The dawn of the machine planet: how technology advances and ubiquitous digital transformation are redesigning our society

Through years of working with and analysing different situations and individual careers, we have identified sufficient professional material—joint reflections, considerations—to provide structured testimonials on how the “*demand side*” was both facing and hosting the ongoing digital transformation.

These collected reflections offer an overview of the perceived status of this change. We expect this contribution will be appreciated not only by the originating CIO community representatives but also by those of the general public who are interested in a deeper understanding of the ICT revolution and the related business transformation facts.

This book summarizes this opportunity, thusly providing a set of pragmatic approaches to address the controversial aspects of the “*digital transformation*”.

The following set of testimonials focus particularly on the effects of continuous technological transformations in a crucial component of the corporate digital organization: the ever-changing role of the CIO (Chief Information Officer).

Chapters are structured to host 2 major converging viewpoints: the managerial, represented by CIOs, and the academic, represented by university researchers.

This book starts by addressing the challenges faced by the CIO with a completely new role and continues with a description of the new digital governance needed to drive companies to a successful transformation journey.

We hope that these varied reflections will offer the reader a valuable image of new scenarios as well as some useful insights on the shifts that are currently in motion, calling for full digital integration.

Working, discussing and interacting with this particular set of people over sixteen years have raised many questions about how organizations in different sectors handle discontinuities and react to compelling change and about where to draw inspiration and insights from this revolutionary unstoppable and overwhelming transformation. Very often, we found different approaches and unbalanced mixtures of enthusiasm, successes, failures, disappointment and frustration. Also, we ultimately discovered that this revolution is not only a matter of technology, and therefore, we determined a

need to reposition the human factors as central to the understanding of new contexts and correctly positioning their underlined uniqueness, ambiguity and uncertainty.

The set of testimonials found in this book should support the general need for a strong digital transformation, showing commercial and governmental organizations how effective a realistic governance effort can be in facilitating successful and lasting change.

CIOs, among other major top management players, are facing a period of unprecedented threats, innovation dilemmas and unexpected opportunities.

IT leaders are taking innovation initiatives and revamping or replacing traditional applications as critical priorities: this attitude appears to be based first on due respect for legacy, on the unmissable human aspects of this transformation and subsequently, as vital agents of change, on the willingness to correctly understand and interpret the unprecedented value and new digital business logic.

Investing in the future today, more than in the past, is of paramount importance in order to nurture the virtuous success cycle and to exploit the strategic potential of new emerging digital technologies.

Editors and authors are listed in alphabetical order. This order does not reflect the level of contribution and effort put in this editorial project.

Milan, Italy
Milan, Italy
Venice, Italy

Giorgio Bongiorno
Daniele Rizzo
Giovanni Vaia

CIOs and the Digital Transformation

A New Leadership Role

Bongiorno, G.; Rizzo, D.; Vaia, G. (Eds.)

2018, XI, 230 p. 29 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-31025-1