Focus always on humans
Dream big and imagine the future

Jordan Nguyen, who delivered the keynote address at the Reimagination Summit 2019, says technology takes a second place to humanity. PHOTO: BENNY TANG
Human touch comes first in importance

Future mindset
Australia is a great place for a start-up.

Mark Eggleton
The world needs to find the “beautiful and positive opportunities within the technologies of today”, said the Founder of Payzer. Jordan Nguyen at the recent Reimagination Summit in Melbourne.

Dr Nguyen was delivering the keynote address at the summit and while acknowledging technology is currently throwing up numerous ethical issues around the use of big data and surveillance, as well as other “transmorphic” issues, he suggested we work to avoid them by always putting humans first.

“At all costs, put humans first. We need to keep up and embrace the changes of today because we can’t exactly stop them happening but we can shift, shape and change them,” he said.

For Dr Nguyen, who is an internationally renowned documentary engineer, entrepreneur and former finalist for the Australian of the Year, the future is all about humanity first and technology second.

“It should never be about the technology we can achieve with it,” he told the audience.

“Humans are able to “dream big and take action because we are not limited by our own imagination,” he said.

“Not being limited by our imagination and being passionate are two of the key drivers that Macquarie Telecom Group chairman Peter James looks for when he invests in start-ups.

He reckons Australia is one of the best places in the world to start a technology business. Speaking on a venture capital panel at the summit, Mr James, who is also chairman of drone security company DroneShield as well as well-versed imagery specialists Neamrp (whose founder Robert Newman also spoke at the summit), said Australia is a great sandbox for early-stage companies.

“We are a small market but we’re early adopters of tech and we have disposable income,” Mr James said.

He suggests local entrepreneurs should look to “try your product here, work it out in Australia, perhaps New Zealand and then take it overseas.”

“What excites me in the venture capital space are models that can scale globally,” he said.

“I like smart technology, a solid business and good people who like the thrill of the chase. What don’t I like is hucksters,” he said.

Moreover, he said Australian companies can only build their technology here but also harness the world’s best talent because Australia is a great place to live.

“Young people from around the world want to come, work and live here,” he said.

President of the Australian Computer Society (ACS), Yohan Ramasundara said the Reimagination Summit presents the local technology sector with an opportunity to reflect on its progress and how it’s changing.

He’s critical of the nation’s somewhat times blinkered approach to technology and our continuing reliance on “fudging and exporting”, which will not sustain the local economy in the long term.

“We need to understand new value creation happens in the digital world and as the technological and digital landscape changes globally, our economy needs to evolve,” Mr Ramasundara said.

Importantly, he said government and business should not go about establishing separate digital strategies.

“Digital is not a separate part of the economy. We need to evolve existing business practices and government legislation to fit the digital world.”

Commenting on his summit high-lights, he said Australia has created many “rockstar” company founders and many of them are starting to come home.

He cited Olivia Humphrey, who founded world-leading film streaming platform Foxtel, public libraries and universities, Kanopy, who is coming home and has “so much to offer the local tech landscape”.

“Dr Jordan Nguyen’s speech touched on a convergent world where the physical, digital and biological come together to create amazing opportunities and challenges.”

“The big question is whether we have the structures and frameworks set up in our economy to ensure we can derive value from this potential trillion-dollar industry,” Ramasundara said.

Helping to set up those frameworks and structures is the ACS itself, which announced its intention to facilitate a new early-stage tech investment fund at the Summit. This comes off the back of acquiring leading accelerator River City Labs in Brisbane from entrepreneur and “Shark Tank” host Steve Baxter last year as well as Startup Catalyst, which takes Australia’s best talent to start-up hotspots all over the world to meet with the most innovative global tech companies.

In the days leading up to Reimagination, ACS also announced global tech veteran Todd McGregor as Startup Catalyst’s new general manager.

He hopes to “ensure we have direct pathways for our best and brightest talent that fosters the growth of our leading Australian tech start up and scaleups on the world stage.”

“Our aim is to grow tall poppies in Australia’s tech sector and economy”.

“What we showed at the Summit was how we can use human creativity to create technology that solves problems.”

Feeling good experience a crucial step to building loyal connections

Customers/Technology must come with empathy too.

Mark Eggleton
In our current so-called age of the customer, some of the hardest-to-please customers are millennials as they flit around brands looking for the right experience.

Moreover, one of the more difficult sectors to engage millennials in is superannuation because most financial institutions have technology that is “out of date and go” or “skimming through accounts on an app”. But in this mind, several disruptors have emerged trying to engage millennials in super but most of them don’t really offer much more than a tech stack and funds index-tracking funds with higher fees.

Founder and CEO of super fund Zuper, Jessica Ellerm, believes while technology is helping young people engage with their superannuation, “what customers care about is how they feel when they are engaging”.

She said at the Australian Computer Society Reimagination Summit in Melbourne.

“If you start by thinking what wadgets are going to connect to what and what tech stack you’re going to use, and the security elements, you’re not going to get to the point where you deliver something that makes them feel good about their contribution to their superannuation.”

Eggleton, who previously ran a team at fintech Tyro, says organisations which understand how to empathise with customers beyond the technology will thrive.

“Customers can be quite forgiving [of organisations] if you deliver them something that they feel really great about,” she says.

At Zuper, Ellerm’s challenge has been to engage a younger generation in a product they traditionally wouldn’t really think about until they’re nearing retirement.

“Most young people have never had an experience with a superannuation company. They might have seen some marketing but there’s no market research out there really tracking how millennials engage with super. There is no baseline.”

For Ellerm, the key is being a little more creative and thinking about what makes consumers feel good about a product or service rather than just the commodity.

“If they feel they have a personal connection to the brand because it’s personalised, you are going to achieve a degree of customer loyalty,” she says.

People don’t care about the tech because the technology doesn’t really feel that different from one brand to another, they care about how it makes them feel.

Ellerm says none of the larger financial institutions really think this way, so she believes there’s “a crazy opportun-uty out there for a company like Zuper.”

On the same panel, the managing director of Adobe ANZ, Suzanne Steele, quoted a statement, often mistranslated to the American poet and civil right activist Maya Angelou, to the effect people “often forget what you say, often forget what you did, but never forget how you made them feel”.

Steele says delivering seamless personal experiences that make customers feel good drives massive customer loyalty.

“It delivers huge engagement because in that moment you feel important to that brand, or to that company, or to that bank.”

“The statistics are there for themselves that organisations who get this right have much more engaged cus-tomers, and are much more profitable,” Steele says.

The chief marketing officer of enterprise solutions provider Kinetic IT, like Roberts, cites Harley Davidson as an excellent example of a company personalising the customer experience.

While the US bike manufacturer uses technology throughout the customer journey, Roberts says it’s all about making the experience more personal and by the time a customer makes the decision to purchase, it becomes “a really engaging and special moment”.

“Buying a motorcycle is not something you’re doing every day so Harley Davidson really focus on how it makes you feel,” Roberts says.

Steele says organisations wanting to deliver great personalised experiences need to be “outside the digital natives into the room, and talk to them about what great experiences look like”.

“It’s all about diversity of thought and putting the customer right at the centre of everything. Your whole business strategy is about the customer and delivering for the customer.”

Most young people have never had an experience with a superannuation company.

Jessica Ellerm, Zuper

Davidson really focus on how it makes you feel.

Tuesday 17 December 2019
The Australian Financial Review | www.afr.com

Special Report | Reimagination 2019

Human touch comes first in importance

Continuous change
Top 10 tech trends for 2020

1. Hyperautomation
Application of AI and machine learning to automate processes.

2. Multixperience
The way people interact in the digital world.

3. Democratisation
A model to tap into automated experience beyond training.

4. Human augmentation
New humans are physically and cognitively augmented by tech.

5. Transparency and traceability
Design and application of data privacy and digital ethics.

6. Empowered edge
Proliferation of sensors and connecting devices.

7. Distributed cloud
Using the internet and remote servers to store and manage data.

8. Autonomous things
The use of nearly self-directed tech objects, such as drones.

9. Practical blockchain
Using digital records of transactions.

10. AI security
Protecting systems powered by artificial intelligence.

Source: Gartner
Look for problems, make lasting impact

Start-ups Wise words for entrepreneurs seeking funding.

Mark Eggleton
“Build a sustainable, lasting business that is going to have a positive impact on this world” is the advice offered to young tech entrepreneurs by Vicky Lay, who heads up Impact Investing at alternative investment firm Artesian.

Lay says the next generation of smart local start-ups is already heading down that path and they are really keen on making a difference as well as making money and providing investors with solid returns.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Reimagination Summit in Melbourne, Lay says there is more than altruism driving the trend towards diversified investing and the deepening interest in clean energy, food and medical technologies.

“We don’t have these in our portfolio because we think they’re great but because they’re a group of challenges that need solving and, therefore, need innovation to tackle them,” she says.

She says wealthy individuals or family offices often want to spend time getting to know you and finding more about your personal story.

“You’ve had pitches where I’ve spent most of my time talking about larger philosophical discussions with the investor before spending the last 10 per cent of that conversation talking about the deal itself,” she says.

Conversely, VCs have a mandate, there’s rules around what they can and can’t do.”

At Reimagination, Lay was joined on a Venture Capital panel by a number of local start-up luminaries, including Steve Baxter from Transition Level Investments, Dr Michelle Deaker from OneVentures and the chairman of Macquarie Telecom, Peter James.

Baxter agrees entrepreneurs looking for capital really need to know their audience. “Seek and understand what their hot buttons are, understand what they have invested in before and, make a positive impression. Bad impressions are easy to make,” he says.

For Deaker, it’s about understanding investors are time poor and see a lot of pitches. She says you don’t walk in with 60 slides and start at the beginning and try to present your whole business.

“You have a limited amount of time so use it well to get our attention and be prepared for a lot of questions.”

Macquarie’s Peter James agrees: “You have three or four minutes to make an impact and after that people’s attention starts to wane so be very crisp, practise, and answer those four or five questions about your technology and importantly, be authentic.”

And according to Baxter, it’s extremely important not to over-promise or embellish the truth around your product because “if you lie, we will find out and we will hate you”.

You have a limited amount of time so use it well to get our attention.

Michelle Deaker, OneVentures

Reimagination 2019

THOUGHT LEADERS’ SUMMIT

Amazing Humans, Epic Tech

Panel: Rockstar Aussie Founders
Speakers: Tan Le, Stephen Phillips, Dvaa Humphrey, Emma Li Russo

Panel: Data as an Enabler of Business Growth
Speakers: Dayna Stevens, Kirk Webster, Trisha Scott, Brugnan, Brian Oppermann

Panel: A Company Board
Speakers: Wendy Stips, David alderborough, Mary- Anne Williams, Cameron Miller

Panel: Reimagining the Customer Experience Through Technology
Speakers: Suzanne Skidol, Brett Roberts, Jessica Ellium, John Hampton

Panel: Building a Global Technology Business
Speakers: Rob Newman, Bridget Lemon, Richard Whin, Kumar Parakala

Panel: Venture Capital as an Enabler of High Growth for Tech Startups
Speakers: Steve Baxter, Dr Michelle Deaker, Peter James, Vicky Lay

Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia

Keynote: Epic Tech for Humanity
Speaker: Jordan Nguyen

Yohan Ramasundara
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Check out a recap of the event at reimagination.acs.org.au
**Australia must adopt a global view on growth**

**Kumar Parakala** says technologists are themselves getting disrupted.

"The people who are working in the industry do not see beyond their own small bubble," he says. "There is a huge gap between what is being told us and what is really happening outside our own industry."

"As a society, we have to recognize that the future of our country is not shifting internally but externally. The world has changed, and we have to change as well," Parakala says.

"We need to have a global view on growth," he says. "We need to understand that the world is becoming more connected, and we need to adopt a ‘business-as-usual’ approach was to sustainable prosperity."
ACS Congratulates the 2019 Winners

Individual Awards

ICT Professional of the Year
Sheryl Frame
SBE Australia & EDICT International Consultants

Young ICT Professional of the Year - Female
Monique Alvis
Cap Gemini Applied Innovation Exchange

CXO Disruptor of the Year
Vinay Samuel Zetaris

ICT Student of the Year
Marina Geldard
University of Tasmania

Young ICT Professional of the Year - Male
Jeremiah Mannings
Cap Gemini

ICT Educator of the Year
Yenni Tim
University of New South Wales

Team/Project Awards

Service Transformation for the Digital Consumer
Myriota
Corporate
Noisy Guts PTY LTD
Government
University of Western Australia

Skills Transformation of Work Teams
Small (under 20)
University of Technology Sydney | OnePath Life

Medium (21 - 200)
DXC Dandelion Program

Large (200+)
Edith Cowan University

Best New Startup Platform
Sentient Hubs

View the full list of finalists at reimagination.acs.org.au/disruptors
Privacy a growing concern

Security Personal data must be protected in a world of "smart" things.

Mark Eggleton

Australia is leading the world in taking a first step towards developing a global standard for personal data privacy and cyber security and it is something that "absolutely needed", says the New South Wales chief data scientist Ian Opperman.

Opperman is the lead author of the Australian Computer Society’s Privacy-Preserving Data Sharing Frameworks report which grew out of discussions Australia took to the joint technical committee of the International Organisation for Standardisation and the International Electrotechnical Commission or ITU.

The report comes at a time when huge amounts of our personal data are linked to numerous services and devices and an increasing number of Australians start to fret about the level of surveillance they are under.

In Shoshana Zuboff’s book The Age of Surveillance Capitalism, she refers to the creeping world of “smart” things such as lighting and thermostats as the “Big Other” where the idea of a private sanctuary no longer holds.

She argues the privilege of sanctuary has been with us since humanity’s earliest days and it’s embraced in many of our laws and informs a large part of our beliefs. In the book she calls for stronger protections than Europe’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Bearing this in mind, JTC-1 has been wrestling with the challenge of preserving privacy in the data age for over four years, according to Opperman.

The committee’s purpose is to develop, maintain and promote standards in the fields of information technology and Information and Communications Technology.

He acknowledges privacy concerns are a huge issue for government and business because as organisations try to build out and improve products and services, they continually ask for more data.

“It’s a problem for smart cities and for smart electricity, smart lighting as well as for artificial intelligence, information governance and databases – it’s a problem for everybody,” Opperman says.

Though a great deal of data about an individual is personally identifiable, such as how public transport is used by unidentified individuals, at what point does linking loss of non-identifiable information together become personally identifiable?

“We need to have a measure, or thresholds, for how much personal information can be used so a person doesn’t become identifiable and if we can do that we can largely take the privacy argument off the table or we can build risk frameworks around privacy that outline the personal information factor an organisation can have,” Opperman says.

He says the standards would only be the starting point as they don’t address the concerns around the sensitivities associated with data-driven insights and decisions.

“It’s the base level of data collection before any analytics or activity takes place,” he says.

“What we’re trying to do is work out a measure for personal information and a robust enough measure that we can tell where we are on the creepy line and take the appropriate precautions.”

For Opperman, the world needs to look at the terminology around personal information versus personally identifiable information and seek clarity around the use of those two terms.

“They are quite different concepts – personal information is something like an individual’s hair or eye colour, whereas personally identifiable means ones that people tend to associate with the technology has to offer.”

Opperman was speaking to The Australian Financial Review at the ACS Reimagination Summit in Melbourne where he appeared on a panel examining data as a business enabler.

 Fellow panelist and chief data officer at AGL, Dayle Stevens, says the big challenge for AGA is building data capability. It’s getting people to understand data capabilities while also main taining a “high level of data governance around privacy and security and all of the controls you need around that.”

“How do you protect customers’ data rights while also becoming more efficient and effective as well as discovering new lines of business as well?”

Stevens says many organisations have been good at building trust around customer interactions over the last decade but understanding how to best utilise data while maintaining trust is not “just a challenge, it’s the new big necessary thing to do.”

Organisations might have an infinite amount of data at their fingertips but it’s not of much use if they don’t know how to use it or if it is not the right sort.

Part of the job of an organisation isn’t even an organisation doesn’t need a lot of data, “we can work with tiny amounts of data so we can work out what’s important”.

“Then we can build something and that is all done by people,” she says.

The real benefits come from the actions taken by people and that requires ensuring you have the right culture in an organisation and people understand data capabilities.”

We need a measure, or thresholds, for how much personal data can be used. Ian Opperman, NSW chief data scientist

We need a measure, or thresholds, for how much personal data can be used.

Ian Opperman, NSW chief data scientist

Press the right buttons on machine learning

Ethics

Ian Grayson

Australia cannot let fears about artificial intelligence (AI) and its potential for harm mask the vast opportunities the technology has to offer.

ACS Reimagination Thought Leaders’ summit keynote speaker and founder of technology firm Psychicket, Dr Jordan Nguyen, says AI is often portrayed as a negative force, but it’s important to understand the value it can deliver.

“We’ve had warnings from leading industry experts and movies and, often, those warnings are justifiable,” he says.

“Every major technology that we have has dark sides and ethical issues, but there are also always positive opportunities in it. It comes down to how we choose to use it.”

Nguyen says AI can be challenging for people to fully understand because it’s a category that contains many different types.

“You can’t paint it with a single brush. There are some areas that are going to be quite challenging and it is those that people tend to associate with the term.”

“However, just because a particular AI has been built to, for example, master a game, doesn’t mean it is suddenly going to make decisions to take over the human race.”

Nguyen also acknowledges that people have concerns about the potential for AI to cause widespread job losses as it automates tasks that previously required a human.

“While there will be job losses, there will also be new opportunities created as a result of its use,” he says. “When it comes to jobs, it’s important to consider which ones will be affected and what alternatives there are for those involved in the change.”

“Everything comes with balance and we need to see both sides of the story.”

Failures are part of the process of innovation

Young winners

Jonathan Porter

The winners of the ACS's Young ICT Professional of the Year Awards say it is a category that contains many different types.

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Information Technology (IT) is the greatest general-purpose technology invented by mankind. Almost every aspect of life and business continues to be redefined by IT.

IT is more than a tool for profit. Mankind can use IT to reach for the stars and leverage IT to drive global reforms. Wisely led and managed well, IT creates endless and exciting possibilities.

Humanity can now imagine that one day we could use the resources of infinite space and restore our finite Earth. This is an exciting vision to unite a planet.

Australia's prosperity rides on quarrying coal and iron ore. Demand for coal will decline, high prices for iron ore cannot be guaranteed and automation dwindles our quarry workforce. We need to reimagine what will generate our future income if we are to maintain current living standards.

The global digital landscape is evolving and consolidating rapidly; and economies and business models must evolve too. Even the Westphalian system of nation-states may be waning. We must rethink how we live together and run our economy.

We must reimagine our smart-future, socialise and codify a long-term vision and build and deliver practical plans to make it our new reality.

The time to pivot our economy and embrace tomorrow – is now.

Yohan Ramasundara
President, ACS

Get more information on ACS’ newly announced early stage tech investment fund. Send your EOI to fundpledge@acs.org.au