

5

TECH TRENDS

that will reshape IT in 2018

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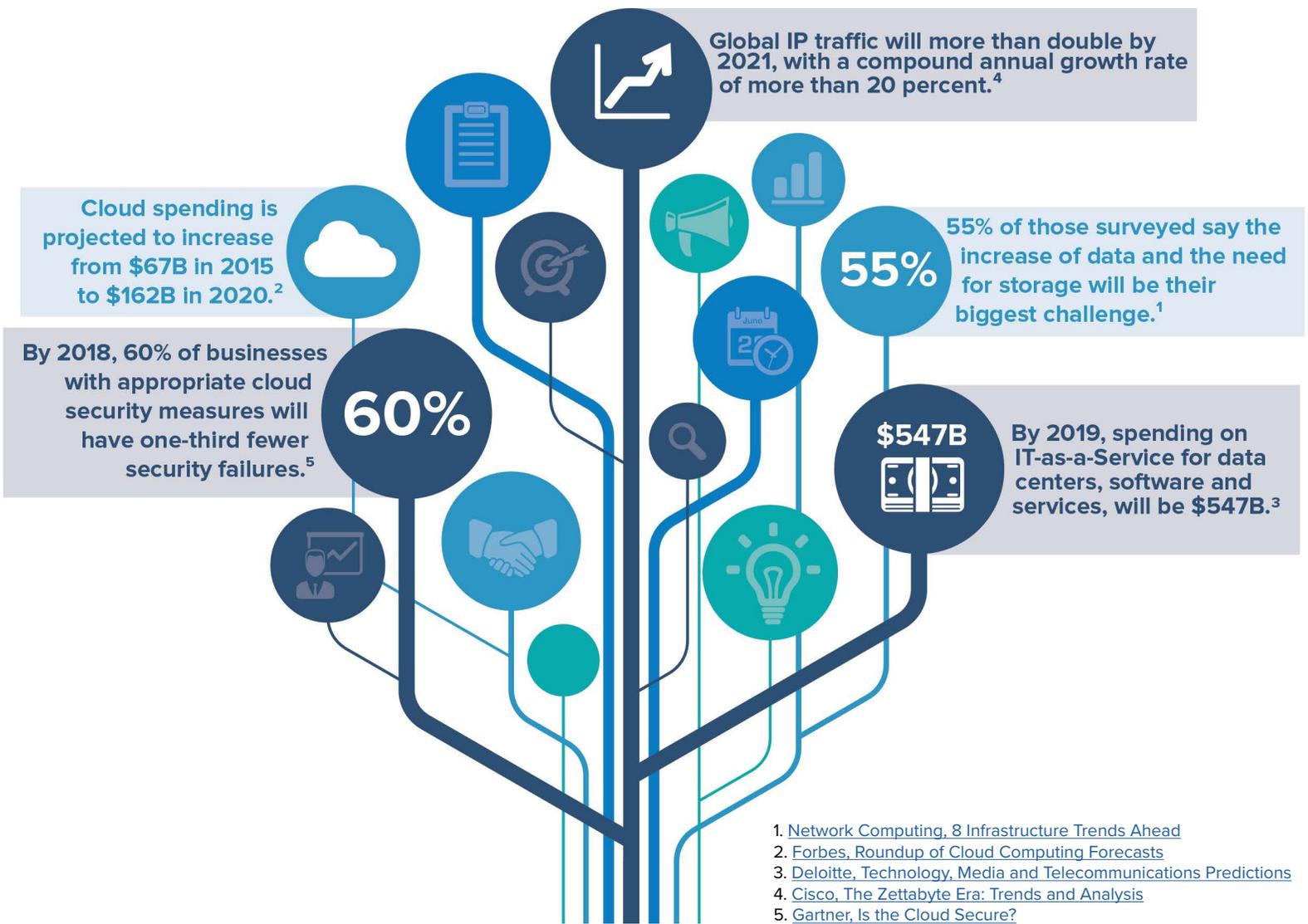
Business



5 TECH TRENDS that will reshape IT in 2018

2018 will be a year of acceleration as IT professionals and business leaders adapt to higher data demands, increasing bandwidth requirements, and loftier customer expectations. Consumption trends that emerged years ago will reach a critical mass in the near-term, making IT adjustment an urgent matter for many businesses.

There are five upcoming changes that that will likely have the biggest impact on day-to-day operations of the IT and business executive this year. Understanding these trends will help decision-makers make changes that will be more cost-effective and easier to manage in the long-term.



TREND #1:

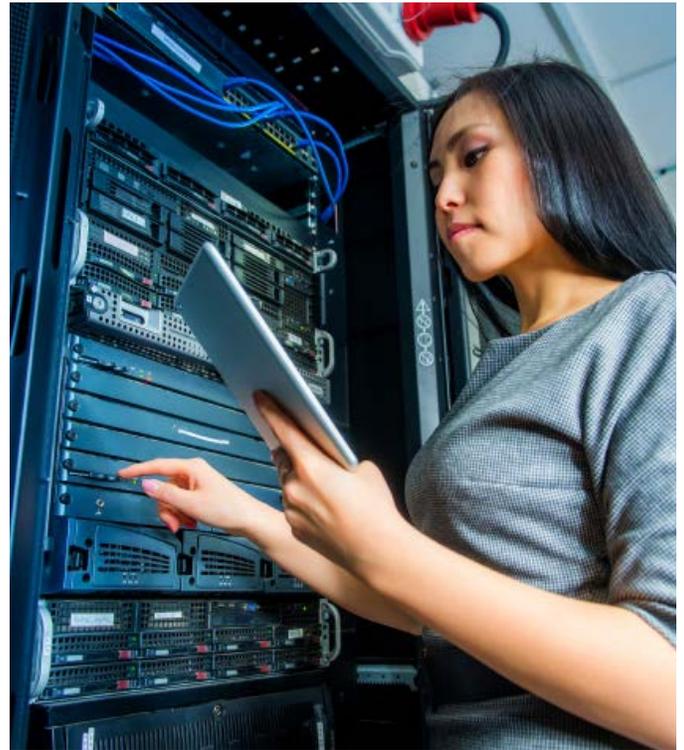
Elevated Importance of IT Shifts Business Priorities

Now is a good time to be an IT pro in many businesses—at least for those who don't mind change. Increasingly, IT staff are stepping away from routine management tasks, and are stepping into other departments to help drive strategic technology initiatives, such as automation and analytics.

As such, IT opportunity costs are increasing, and many low-level tasks are being outsourced. By the end of 2018, spending on IT-as-a-Service for data centers, software and services will be \$547B, [according to a report by Deloitte Consulting](#). In this timeframe, Deloitte expects increased spending on new IT technologies through 2022, from \$361B to \$547B. Outsourced IT will represent more than half of this spending.

During this shift, services that have been on the fringe of IT departments, such as telephony management, will continue to lose ground to hosted solutions. Unified communications are increasingly attractive solutions to IT departments looking to streamline and hand off telecommunications, and technology is garnering larger percentages of IT budgets.

However, IT professionals should not feel threatened by outsourcing, automation, IT-as-a-service, or hosted services. These tactics are shifting rather than shrinking, the demand for IT expertise, according to a salary guide survey of more than 8,000 technology professionals by Robert Half Technology. Workers who are willing to learn new skills will be more highly sought after by employers, who will prioritize keeping up with changing technology; 52 percent of technology recruiters that participated in the Robert Half survey said that conversations around career path and growth opportunities are the main focus of initial job interviews.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

There's an increasing amount of gravity that seeks to pull IT pros away from internal systems and into other departments. This evolution will become increasingly important for business growth, but will make business-as-usual for most IT departments increasingly expensive. To adapt, many businesses are opting to outsource routine management tasks to free up IT resources.

TREND #2:

Consumer Demands Threaten to Outpace Technological Capabilities

Innovative companies like Google and Apple are to blame for setting a high bar for technology. They've taught consumers to demand continual innovation, everywhere accessibility, and constant uptime. It's gotten to the point that many IT teams are scrambling to keep up with their expectations.

IT professionals in the banking world are particularly feeling the increasing demands of customers, whose "nomadic" banking tendencies lead them to take their money to a new institution at the first displeasure. Downtime and lack of access to services are a main culprit of their departure.

"Consumer expectations are outpacing technology," says Kevin Burke, CIO for ASI Federal Credit Union based out of New Orleans, LA. "For one thing: banking hours are a thing of the past."

For Kevin, satisfying customers means not only tailoring technology to consumer experiences, but delivering constant uptime and having customer-centric disaster recovery. For instance, when a hurricane damaged the data center where the Credit Union's systems were, a series of unforeseen disasters led to unnecessary downtime and a negative impact to business, although critical system recovery performed acceptably.

"Did the DR system work? Yes," says Kevin, describing the lesson learned from the Hurricane. "Did it work for our customers? No."

Many other businesses are learning the same lessons, and are adjusting their DR plans for faster recovery.

"The desire for tighter recovery times is driving business decisions," says Barrett Williams, Director of Delivery Services for EATEL Business. "More clients are augmenting backups with real-time replication solutions, like Zerto, to make business continuity more seamless. Recovering large amounts of data from backups can be too time consuming and slow recovery efforts. Having the data replicated can save hours of time in the event of a disaster."

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Consumers have "iPhone expectations" for most products these days, demonstrating an increased demand for new features and higher levels of application accessibility. Companies that can't roll out new improvements at an iPhone pace can at least take extra measures to make their products and applications more accessible, stable, and safe.

TREND #3:

Explosive Data Growth Drives Cloud-First Data Strategies

It's no great revelation that data is growing. But in 2018, the growth will be explosive, and managing the expansion will become a top priority for many IT pros.

[According to a late 2017 survey of 150 IT professionals by Interop ITX](#), 55 percent of those surveyed said that managing more data will be their biggest challenge in the short term. The survey said that about 10-51 percent were now managing between 1TB and 99.9 TB of data, and most of those claimed their data stores were still increasing at rapid rates of almost 10-24 percent annually.

To handle this volume, most IT pros will be migrating data to the cloud. [Forbes reports](#) that cloud computing is projected to increase from \$67B in 2015 to \$162B in 2020, leading to a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 19 percent. One reason for this massive increase is a strategic shift from many businesses from cloud-friendly to cloud-first, especially when it comes to data storage, applications, and infrastructure.

However, the magnitude of data growth will lead many IT pros to employ a mix of storage strategies, which will still include physical infrastructure. In fact, [about a quarter of IT professionals](#) plan on increasing infrastructure spending by up to ten percent, according to a survey of more than 2,000 IT professionals. Many infrastructure investors are those that have security concerns about the cloud, and 49 percent say they've slowed cloud adoption due to a lack of cybersecurity skills.

However, it seems like those who are skeptical about cloud security will come around soon. [Intel reports](#) that nearly twice as many people now trust the cloud as those who do not. Those who trust the cloud say they believe the technology delivers lower cost of ownership and better data visibility, and that cloud technology benefits greatly out shadow the security risks.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Now is the time to plan for future data storage. As the pursuit of scalability fuels a mass migration to the cloud, IT managers should carefully weigh their options carefully before following suit. In any case, decision makers should be prepared that data storage challenges may take up more of their time, and resources, in the future.

TREND #4:

Growing Hunger for Bandwidth Creates Competition Gaps

Almost every technology will take a bigger bite out of bandwidth in 2018, and this will be a stumbling block for many companies. [Cisco's latest bandwidth report](#) forecasts that Global IP traffic will increase more than double by 2021, with a compound annual growth rate of more than 20 percent. This is expected to result in a monthly IP traffic of an estimated 35 GB per capita by 2021.

A main culprit for this rise in bandwidth consumption is mobile devices, which is expected to finally overtake PC as the top consumer of bandwidth, and which consumes data even in workplaces. However, both PCs and mobile devices will be chewing up lots more data. Streaming video is the main culprit, but enterprises and businesses will also be employing more data-hungry tactics, like real-time analytics and software-defined networking, [according to IT news organization Channel Partners Online](#).

This trend would be much more manageable if it were a predictable and even distribution, but unfortunately, cumbersome bandwidth spikes will present obstacles and test networks to their limits. Rush hour traffic is getting even more congested, and [Cisco estimates](#) a busy hour traffic to increase by 4.6 percent by 2021.

Another serious challenge in the hunger for bandwidth is the lack of high-speed infrastructure nationally in the United States. In 2017, the U.S. had only about 25 percent coverage of high-speed fiber that could deliver speeds above 500 Mbps.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Lack of bandwidth availability will soon become a pain point for many businesses, and IT managers and business leaders will have to either or boost their connectivity or decrease their bandwidth consumption through technologies like edge computing. Unfortunately, the relative lack of high-speed availability in the United States will pose growth challenges to many businesses.

TREND #5:

Cloud Security Becomes Top Priority

It's a natural law of data security: where data goes, so do hackers. Since 2017 was a year of data migration to the cloud, the booming cybersecurity industry—with its estimated 0-percent unemployment rate—is bracing for an influx of cyber security threats. The outcome will likely be a bigger, safer cloud for everyone.

Until then, each individual business should still be proactive in cloud security, especially in 2018. [Gartner predicts](#) that, by 2018, 60 percent of enterprises that implement appropriate cloud security measures will experience one-third fewer security failures.

Data security governance programs will be an enterprise's main weapon against cloud security breaches, and is estimated that 20 percent of organizations will develop such a program that aims to prevent data of unauthorized access to cloud data through policies and procedures, [reports Forbes](#).

Another way that IT will mitigate cloud-data security risks is by switching to containment strategies rather than by attempting complete prevention. Security pros have come to accept an unfortunate reality: with enough time and resources, a competent hacker will inevitably be able to infiltrate systems. As such, IT pros will have to decide which data stores can suffer a breach in the worst case, and what contingencies to follow when it happens.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

When it comes to cloud security, trust but verify. As it stands, cloud storage will remain the safest data storage strategy, and security will continue to improve in time. However, data visibility and access policies will be necessary for higher levels of data security.

SUMMARY

IT will likely have a bigger job than ever in 2018. Increases in data usage, bandwidth consumption, and security threats will challenge leaders with heftier resource requirements while also imposing a greater need for agility.

IT managers who can best keep up with the demand for IT services and effectively control the increasing volumes and cost of data and bandwidth will have the greatest success moving forward. This will entail securing the right solutions for data management, security, and IT outsourcing.

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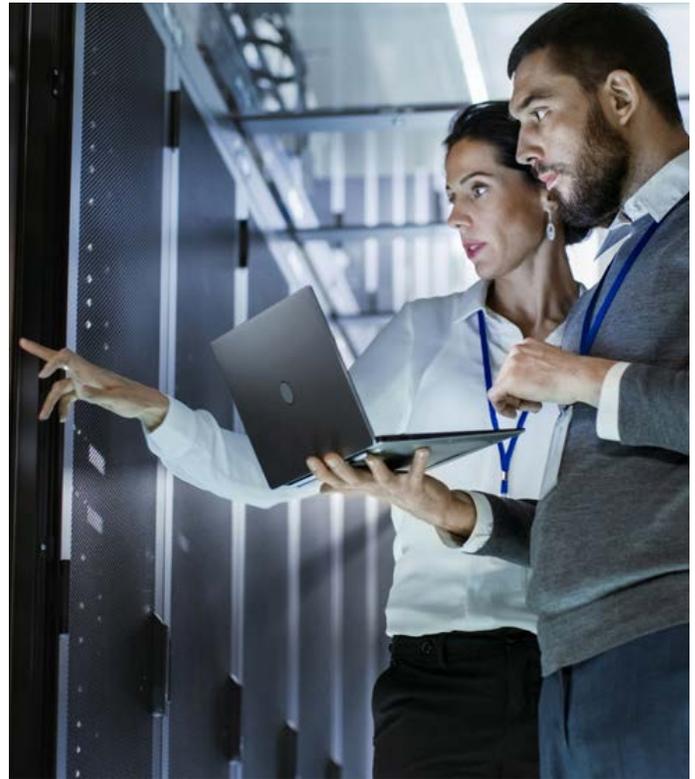
ABOUT EATEL BUSINESS

EATEL BUSINESS IS A LOUISIANA-BASED PROVIDER OF DATA-CENTER SOLUTIONS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, AND MANAGED IT.

Our focus is to provide comprehensive business solutions all under one brand, so businesses can operate more efficiently. Over the years, we have expanded to 38 states, and will continue to help businesses prosper through innovation.

We deliver our solutions with the highest focus on customer service. Our business partners can rest easy knowing their critical data and systems are in great hands with people they like and trust. White glove service, along with in-house support, helps clients succeed.

With decades of experience, a customer-focused service philosophy, and an extensive product portfolio to meet any business need, **EATEL Business is MORE THAN A PROVIDER.**



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