CLOUD REALITIES

CR057

From DJ to Cloud telecom platform provider with Peter Schroeder, Telzio

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[00:00:00] Is it mandated you do the Christmas party music? Then I don't think it's mandated. I think they don't have a choice. You're just doing it. That's not about me. It's about them.

Welcome to Cloud Realities, a conversation show exploring the practical and exciting alternate realities that can be unleashed through cloud driven transformation. I'm David Chapman. I'm Sjoukje Zaal, and I'm Rob Kernahan.

And this week we're going to be looking at B2B telecoms platforms. We're going to speak to an organization that's created.

So. new thinking around how organizations interact with each other, synchronously and asynchronously. But before we get to that, I was coming into the office the other day, and you will know that sometimes when you get these big corporate offices, [00:01:00] there's They have these like perfume sales in the, in the lobbies of, of them.

And you can go in and I don't, I actually, I don't know why these things exist, but you go in and you can buy perfume there and stuff like that. And Rob was behind the counter of that selling perfumes for the day. And I'm like, I walked in and I'm like, Rob, what are you up to? And he goes like, David. Bit of a side hack, you know, kind of investing in my future.

So I'm doing this just on the side. I'll be, I'll be upstairs by 10 o'clock and I'm like, yeah, that's okay. So you come upstairs, uh, and he's, you know, feeling good about himself and a few Bob in the foyer before. And I'm like, what's confusing you this week, Rob? I don't know where to go with that one, Dave, but you've just given me an idea.

Maybe I should turn up an hour early to work and entrepreneurship. It's diversification of my revenue streams. I think, I think you're onto some, actually, you're going to see that all in the same building, all in the same building. You barely my first customer. Well, I will, as long as you get a good line in.

Oh no, you'll just have to put any old crap, any old trap on that, [00:02:00] ourselves. This week, Dave, mainly, I was, uh, starting to wonder about cosmic rays and getting confused by them, and I'll tell you why. You know when you, you know when you, well, I was reading up on this, you know when your computer does something really odd and you don't know why?

Give us an example. So, there was a, I'll give you two examples that I found, in that, a voting machine in Belgium, and this was back in 2003, gave a political candidate an extra 4, 096 votes. And everybody got very confused by where these votes came from, and of course, 4, 096 is a very significant number in computing, 2 to the 12 in binary.

And so when they did the investigation. That's an excellent little side fact there. You gotta be able to calculate binary, fucker. It's basics! Get the basics right! But they, um, was, uh, they had to put it down to Cosmic Ray striking a bit and causing a bit flip. And another one That's where they ended up with the explanation.

Yeah, yeah, that's it. It might have been a lazy, uh, technical investigation to go, ah, it's Cosmic Ray, mate. I mean, that's my big takeaway from [00:03:00] this, obviously. Before you can get to the end When, when, you know, when something goes wrong, I'll be like, it's Cosmic Grey, isn't it? Well, so, there's another one where there was a speedrunner doing Mario speedrunning, and suddenly Mario turned upside down, went to the top of the screen, and just shot through, um, the level, and the developers went, they started to get interested, and so Nintendo looked at it, and, uh, it got tracked back to a bitflip.

And it's the only way it was a bit flip. Yeah. And if you flip the bit, Mario does this, right? So again, they went, what flip the bit, right? So the theory is technologies proliferating everywhere. How many of these are already happening? And we just stick it down to a

random crash. And actually, how long is it before a bit flip causes something a bit more serious?

And that was what I was confused about. Is it a thing we need to worry about, or is it just one of those things that'll go into the distance? Or is it just the best excuse they could come up with for the issues that they were finding? Oh, so what you're saying is, like, the tech support can't be arsed. And, uh, just a bit flip.[00:04:00]

Yeah. Cosmic Ray caused a bit flip and everyone be like, Oh, okay. I didn't know that was a thing. And about, yeah, it's a thing. Trust me. Trust me. I'm a professional. Thank you so much for sharing this because now I have an excuse that I can use. I'm thinking the incidences of cosmic rays hitting things amongst our listenership are going to massively go up.

Uh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, why, why did it fail? Cause that's cosmic rays in it. Can't do anything about it. It comes from space. Can't stop them. No, but there's a little bit more, there's a little bit more science behind it than, than just that there is a bit of a fear about having to shield critical systems about it and things.

So maybe you might use an excuse, but I do think there's a bit of a theory there, but I just wondered if it's like, is it, does it happen more than we realize? And it's a bit of the randomness in the machine that we don't understand. I mean, yes, I mean, it could be, couldn't it? Uh, I, I think I'd need to know a little bit more about the science of What it actually is and how it [00:05:00] actually works before I can accept it as something as a basically a ray comes from space Literally strikes a chip gate because they're that small and causes it to flip from a zero to a one or a one to a zero That is literally what it's doing.

You know, you know what when you look at I know this is an audio only podcast But for the listeners Dave has just given me the most skeptical face. I think I've ever seen in Paul I mean, it's beyond, it was almost quite worrying the level of contempt you had for me at that point. On that note, let's get, let's get, we're not going to resolve this one, so let's get, let's get on to our main subject of the day.

We're going to talk about the Telecom B2B platforms, the innovation that's going on in that space. And there is, there is just a great deal happening. And like in most verticals at the moment, over the course of the next 10 years with the piping in of AI, more is going to happen. And it's going to, the innovation is going to get faster and faster.

I'm delighted to say that joining us to talk about this is the founder and chief executive of Telzio, [00:06:00] Peter Schroeder. Peter, thanks so much for joining us today. Where do we find you in the world? And tell us a little bit about yourself. Yeah. Hey, thank you for having me. I'm in Los Angeles. Um, so yeah, but tell me a little bit about yourself.

I am, uh, I'm a serial entrepreneur. I guess it's what people call it now. I don't see myself that way, but it's been starting a few businesses since I was really young and had a pretty long career in music, which I never really ended. Uh, I just took a pause to start a telecom, uh, that I've been running now for the past 10 years.

So Peter, I think to start the story, I've got to know what the feeling is like when you're on a plane and you know, that plane is going to crash. So why don't you tell us about that moment and what was going through your head? So the funny thing is, and I should probably talk to some professional about this because I don't remember.

Right, right. Yeah, I actually forgot being on that plane until a couple of years ago. [00:07:00] Really? Really? It came out during a dinner conversation with some friends and we're like, Oh yeah, wait a minute. I was on that plane and then everything just came back. But yeah, I had

completely pushed it out. So presumably you found out about it afterwards.

Like what, what, what kind of plane was it? And was it a very serious accident? Like how, what, what actually happened? So it was a turboprop, a commuter jet or a commuter turboprop with um, maybe room for 80 people, like a dash eight. And we were going from Copenhagen to Alburg. I was on my way up to see my mom.

And, uh, as we were about to, uh, approach or prepare for landing, I guess it's called. Um, they said over the speakers that they couldn't get the lights to light on, uh, saying that the, the landing gear was locked in place. And so they've spent an hour circling over the, uh, the airport and preparing and, and, and all that.

But we weren't really at that time. Nervous because a week before [00:08:00] another airplane from the same airline had the same issue and landed perfectly right. So we were just like, okay, cool. And the people are the cabin crew was pretty professional as far as I can remember. There wasn't really the panic. And I even called my mom and said, Hey, I'm gonna be a little bit late, but didn't say why.

Right? So, um, But, but as we landed, um, the landing gear did collapse. We ran off the runway and it tilted over on the side and the propeller went through the fuselage and a bunch of things. So luckily there's no casualties. There's one lady, she broke her arm and that was it. I mean, that's amazing that the worst injury was a broken arm considering what you've just described there.

So that's pretty lucky really, I suppose, considering. Yeah, incredible. Yeah. And, and, and, you know, that's probably also why I, I, I pushed it out of memory because I had so much going on in my life at that time. I was actually on a plane later that same evening going to Germany, uh, for a DJ gig. You got back on a plane after being in a plane crash.

Seemly. Legitimately, [00:09:00] you could have gone, I've had enough of planes for the week. They say that once you've been in one, then that's it for the rest of your life, right? So yeah, you just did the math, did the math, got back on the thing. But I think there's, you know, that thing when you have babies, you can't, you can barely remember.

The first six months of their life. Right. And I think it's probably because like from an evolutionary point of view, if you could remember how hard those first six months where the human race would probably have died out about, you know, 500 years ago or something like that. Instantly. Yeah, I think it's something like your mind just sort of.

You know, blots that stuff out, doesn't it? In the way that you can't remember the actual event here. Or, I thought the other side of things, is because at the time, I believe you were working as a DJ, as you just said. So maybe that's got something to do with the fact you can't remember it. Oh yeah, I mean, I was, I was, uh, it was probably one of the busiest periods of my life.

Uh, during that time, it was, it was, I was playing gigs like three, four, five times a week. [00:10:00] And, and, uh, and, and yeah, it was, it was a crazy time. So it's probably something with that, you know, it was just one of those things that just happened along the way. And then, you know, back on the horse and here we go.

You ever got a gig tonight? So tell us, tell us a little bit about that as well. Like, uh, because I know that the DJing story here actually leads into some of your. Some of your technical entrepreneurship. So tell us a little bit to start with about the about the DJ experience and where you've done that.

And the sort of clubs you're in. Yeah. So I mean, I started really, really early on. I found

out when I was nine, I think that I wanted to be a DJ when I saw one at school dance or something. And I was like, this is cool. You can play songs and just make people have a good time. I want to do that. And then I really just started that through my teenage years, you know, playing a friend's Parties and then bigger and bigger.

And eventually I got into clubs and, and just worked my way up. I took the long route, you know, and, um, eventually I met some friends and, uh, that, that I started making music with, I had a band and found out that, Hey, I could also release that music instead [00:11:00] of letting a record label do that. So I started my own label, uh, ran that for a few years until that was acquired by Sony.

And then, you know, during the time, uh, where, where this crash happened, um, I was playing, I think. 3, 383 gigs, I think it was during, uh, a period of 12 months. So I mean that more than one a year. More than one a day. Right. ? That is insane. And those are like two or three, four hour sets, something like that? Uh, well, not, not those ones.

Uh, a lot of those were kind of event gigs. So it's like a, an hour and a half or, or, or an hour maybe. Right. Um, uh, and like, it would be like two in one or two in the afternoon and then one or two at night, um, uh, at clubs. Wow. I burned out. I, I, it was just not fun anymore. You know, I played too many. It was, it was more like a job, uh, the same songs and all that stuff, you know, it's not fun.

So I took a pause on, on, on the, on the bookings. I actually called my, my manager and say, Hey, let's, let's, um, put a boss on the, on the bookings. And so, so I can get [00:12:00] back in the studio and make some music again and kind of just like find that, uh, that spark. And, and, and as I was doing that, I started working on another project, kind of a, a promotion platform for, uh, for DJs and record labels and artists to.

Share music and I needed a phone hotline for that, you know, like a support line and I couldn't find anything that I could afford or that had kind of the features I needed all those things. So I'm like, okay, I'll just build it myself. Typically ADD brain here. And as I was doing that, I had so much fun and.

I just kept going. Uh, now I've been doing this for 10 years. What I like about that is necessity being the mother of invention, which was, you wanted to do something creative, you couldn't, so you then created the tool to allow you to do it. Unlike a lot of invention, which is, they create stuff because they can and it has absolutely no use.

And they don't have to look for a problem. Yeah, yeah, that you found the problem and you solved it as opposed to create something ago. We'll try and flog this and it doesn't work because guess what? [00:13:00] There's not a market for it. You can't be a market maker unless you're like an apples. So that's the right way around.

Should we say tell us about the problem in a little bit more detail? First of all, Peter and then how your solution dealt with it? Yeah, yeah. So one of the things that I really hate about SAS products today is this, um. Thing about plans where you have, you know, a startup plan, and then you have a pro plan, an enterprise plan, and you have to buy the enterprise plan to get SSO, which is a requirement.

If you want to take serious security serious, you know? Yeah, which isn't really a choice. Let's face it. Right, right. You should. Everyone should be using, right? That's like, that should be a base level entry. Criteria. I mean, imagine if somebody used the same password for multiple websites. I mean, that sort of thing is like a disaster, isn't it?

I could never imagine that, Rob. No, certainly not doing that thing where it's your, you know,

your podcast co hosts name. And then an incremented number next to it. Like, for example, [00:14:00] terrible. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Nobody does that day. Do they know? I would never do it. And people remember to delete old employees users, right?

On the difficult. Of course. So that's why, um, that you have to buy the and then the big businesses that have already made it and they make a lot of money. Yeah. They can get those features that set up the art and give them the advantage but not the startups, which I was back then. So I was like, okay, this, this is just backwards.

I, uh, so I, I couldn't afford the enterprise plan that had the features I needed. So I'm like, okay, I'll do it. I'll build it myself. And tell us a little bit about that process. So at this point, you weren't thinking, Oh, I'm gonna I think there's a business in this. At this point, you were you were literally just hacking together to try and create a particular solution.

So how did you go about doing that? Well, so I'm I'm a nerd. I have been coding since I was six. So I even when I, you know, make music, I make my own plug ins for the, you know, [00:15:00] software I used and all these different things. So That was not strange to me to, to, to start doing that. That was kind of just a natural reaction to it.

Right. Um, but what I found was once I had kind of built what I needed, I also needed to kind of edit the settings and, and change things on the fly. And I didn't want to go in and edit my code every time. So I started making this little interface for it. Uh, you know, so I can make make the changes that I needed and all of a sudden that was a product.

So I had just met my wife back then and she was like, Hey, well, let's try and put it out and see if people want to buy it. So I posted on Hacker News and people started signing up. That's cool. You know, again, it goes back to the market was you had a problem. Likely others would. And then you get this this instant uptake, which is great.

And it's nice that there are platforms where you can do that. Um, it's like the YouTube thing, which is before YouTube existed, there was a whole market that didn't exist. Then YouTube create their platform. And then you get 19 year olds who are becoming millionaires off the back of sticking them [00:16:00] playing, you know, a video game out.

There's this new accessibility off the back of a platform and completely new models become available. So it's a it's definitely a business process of the Internet generation. Yeah, definitely. It's interesting how things have evolved like that. And, you know, because I created these features for managing, we invented some features, uh, in our company because that are, are, are, you know, almost requirements today that that other businesses have copied from us over the years.

Um, but yeah. That was just, it came out of necessity because I, I had those, those requirements. And then also because we didn't take funding. So, so the first three, four years I had to do tech support and customer service myself. So I actually not only, you know, spoke to the customers, but I actually was able to, you know, find things that the customers didn't even know they needed because I just heard, I kind of their pain points and all that.

And then made me think, and hey, maybe I can solve that in some way. That must have given you an intense, it must have been like a huge amount of work, but it must have given you a really good [00:17:00] intimacy around. You're like the product manager, you're the developer, the support, you publish, you're all of that.

You must, you must have understood it so well. You can get right to the core of a problem with a user and just sort it out there and then and then that, you know, it builds up. It'd be great, but it must have been quite, it must have been so much on. How did you control all of

those dynamics around you?

Well, so so you got to remember that that when we started out, we didn't have many customers. So there wasn't that same workload as there is today. And that grew over the years, obviously. And every time I added a feature, because I heard our customers needed something or reinvented the feature. Every time I had that, then we got bigger customers.

And then eventually we could hire our first developer. And eventually we could hire first supporter. But yeah, for those first, I think three, four years, uh, tech support was, was, was, was my thing. And I, I actually enjoyed it. And I, I would recommend that all CEOs of businesses do like tech support for three days a year or something, because you really get an understanding of what your customers are asking.

Well, to Rob's point, because it [00:18:00] gives you that, not just the tech support angle, but just being so in amongst everything that's literally going on in the business from the, from the technical support and development angle to the actual, then starting to. Bootstrap the business itself, which I want to come back to in a second.

But quickly, while we're on this subject of you almost being the microcosm of the business itself, how have you managed to instill as your business is scaled? How have you managed to instill, you know, like a culture in the organization that sort of retains that level of intimacy that you must feel about the situation?

Well, so I think. A lot of that comes down to the fact that I was in those employees shoes, you know, I did their job. So I understand what they're going through and what, what, what their day to day is. I think that's part of it. But I'm also a terrible manager. I don't like managing employees. So I on purpose keep my head count very, very low and I try to optimize and optimize.

And automate everything I can and then hire some really good employees that I pay really, really [00:19:00] well to make sure they stay on and that they're really good. So because we are a small team compared to the number of customers and compared to our competitors, uh, we are able to kind of keep that camaraderie and that that culture that we had from the beginning.

Um, even though that we are distributed all over the world now. Wow. Amazing. So the company we're talking about is Telzeo. Give us a sense of where you're up to at the moment. So, um, how do you present yourself on the market and and set out the purpose of tells you and then just give us a bit of a sense of scale so we can get a feel for where you're up to on the journey?

Yeah. So, um, if you really boil it down, we are a phone service provider that does B to B. Uh, phone service. We have a platform that we develop ourself, uh, and, and kind of, and, and, uh, manage yourself solution software as a service solution. And we have, we have scaled over the years, obviously, uh, started small and, and eventually, like I said, you know, the cost customers got bigger and bigger, and now we have customers like Samsung, Facebook, [00:20:00] Google, Airbnb, Lyft, and so on and so on.

And we, at the same time, we have small startups that we get still today. Um, so, so we kind of span really, really wide and that's. Again, it goes back to that whole, uh, plan or pricing philosophy is, is, you know, we don't charge for those, those different features or different plans or anything like that.

It's, it's a. You know, uh, pay for the usage only. So that scales really well. Right. Um, and then, yeah, because we have built everything in house, we were able to kind of move first

and in terms of the features, uh, and, and, and kind of, uh, stability and all that. We haven't been down since 2016 now. So, uh, not even for a single minute.

And, and, you know, that goes, goes to, you know, the fact that we can actually control things. We're not like, uh, licensing other, other services or software that we need to. Yeah. Hope get fixed if there's a problem. Um, so yeah, yeah. And very specifically, then you've talked around the fact it's a platform to be to be peace.

Specifically, what's the [00:21:00] experience of it? So if I'm either a small startup or a large organization using it, is it look much like any other? FaceTime, Zoom type thing. Is it, what's the actual experience I'm going to get as a user and what differentiates it? Do you think? Well, so not a lot of things differentiate this product itself today because everyone else has copied our product.

Um, but so, so, so the way it works is, is, is, uh, everything's managed through a website. Uh, you can set up your users and all that, just like any other SAS product, um, where you can also manage what happens to your incoming call, your outbound calls and all these sort of things. And then your employees can.

Make and receive the calls with, of course, a desk phone if they want that, but most people use our mobile app, meaning that they can just use their personal cell phone and have their business calls routed to them anywhere in the world, doesn't matter where they are, and can, of course, send calls to their employee, their co workers and all these things and texting and, and then a bunch of collaboration features so that You kind of can work on those things with your, with your coworkers.

Got it. Got it. [00:22:00] Now the telecoms industry is a very competitive place, isn't it? There's a great deal going on. There's an absolutely enormous amount of innovation and constant movement going on in the telecoms industry. And it's interesting that you know, it doesn't sound like at least from the Your initial development of the solution to your problem to then bootstrapping a business off the back of it.

You weren't like targeting the telecoms industry going. I'm going to move into this very fast paced, highly competitive, high cost of entry industry, but you've ended up there. So what's your what? If you zoom out of tells you for a bit, what's your current perspective on the on the telecoms industry and the and the innovation and cloudification that's going on in the Yeah, so I think, I think the one of the reasons why we had success was really that none of the people on our team come from the telecom industry.

We're software developers and really good at that kind of stuff and making good products, but we're not telecom people. So we think a little bit differently when it [00:23:00] comes to that kind of stuff. We don't, we're not married to the fact that you have to make phone calls, for example, and I don't see it.

Telecom or our industry being a lot about phone calls in the future, I think with is moving towards everything essentially. So, uh, the days where you could save how and dictate how your customers could contact you on the say, I'll put a phone number up in an email address and you can contact me between nine and five on weekdays.

They're gone. You need to be available wherever you are. Your customers are and wherever they want to talk to you, we talked about this, um, MWC, um, where, uh, connectivity, you know, from the complexity of setting up ground based networks to sticking balloons up into the stratosphere and satellites in space.

You've got nowhere on the planet now that can't get a data connection and that's a

commercially viable thing for most people and that's completely changed the interaction model and we've [00:24:00] also seen the rise of asynchronous communications as well and we're in the later generations much prefer a sink and I'll constantly say to him just ring him just ring him and talk to them.

It'll take like 10 seconds to sort. No, I'm going to sit in this heavily protracted 30 minute Transcribed Conversation where I'm not sure if they're going to respond or not. Not saying it's absolutely perfect, but it has completely changed the way we interact as humans and it's on your terms now a lot more as well as not on your terms, like you say.

So it has completely shifted, hasn't it? I think that'll just continue with the fact that you can be connected anywhere. So there is an expectation that you will respond from anywhere. You know what? It's funny. You mentioned that async thing is I'm one of those. I don't like making phone calls. You prefer the async?

You own a phone company, but you don't like making phone calls. That's near perfect. Isn't that great? Certainly gives you a different perspective. So here's the thing. Here's the thing. I was, I was, um, a year ago, I was out buying a car and I test driven it, right? And I decided to buy that [00:25:00] car and I got the business card off the dealer and told him, I'm going to go home and think about it.

And then when I got home, I was like, maybe I should get the one with the bigger engine. So I sent him an email. I didn't want to call him. I was like, I'm just going to send an email and get that, you know, what, what would it cost if I upgrade? And there was nothing. So the next day I went down to a different dealership, different brand, but bought basically the same car because they had the one I wanted.

They could answer my question. And then a month later, I got an email back from him asking, you know, whether do you still need this? The thing is, I had his business card. I had his phone number. I could just call him. But because I didn't call him, I sent him an email. No, but that's your consumer choice though, isn't it?

So you didn't get the response. So you went somewhere else. Whereas it's more full them for the person who doesn't respond to asynchronous communications. Now we've all had to get used to WhatsApp and teams and, uh, you know, slack and email and, and, and, and, and, and this. And I think actually there's an issue with the proliferation of platforms and wondering if it, if they're going to come together [00:26:00] and there's a good, Going to be another integration.

Again, we're talking about the app store dying on the phone and becoming a single interface that you had just have headless API integration with and that would help with this problem where it's just one interface. But yeah, it's um, it could be complex at times. Yeah, so, so that's actually one of the things I've been spending the last couple of years on, uh, trying to solve this part of our next project product that we are launching or next update of our products because we need to figure that out.

Uh, how do I know that you're the one texting me that you also the one that called me yesterday and sent me an email and tweeted at me and sent me an Instagram direct message. I need to know that you're the same person, but I can't as a. oil change service center, be an CRM expert and know all that.

Right. So, so I need to, to have a system to figure that out for me. And I just need to focus on, on responding to my, my clients whenever they contact me. So that's one of the things that I've been been working on. And we have a solution for it. Um, it's going to be an open source

[00:27:00] thing, uh, based on essentially these similar technologies as, as, as NFT.

Uh, yeah. Uh, sort of, uh, it's an encryption based thing where, where you can essentially, uh, update your information, your contact information and, and notify everyone that subscribes to it, but decide who gets to subscribe to which part, um, uh, without, you know, uh, yeah. When you gaze forward and about on a, on a similar thread, I guess, but get gazing forward thinking about the customer experience.

And the consumer experience of a product like yours, but I wonder if you wouldn't mind weaving in what you think the big shifts in the telecommunications industry are going to be and what you're going to have to navigate through to get to a point where you know your. Even more successful in five years time.

So what does that journey look like for you? Do you think so? I think I think there's a couple of different things that that comes into play here. It's uh, one thing is the one we're just talking [00:28:00] about where we need to to be able to handle all these different channels and do it for our clients so that they just have to focus on responding.

They don't need to worry about whether it's a text message or if it's a WhatsApp message or a Facebook direct message or a call, you know, they just need to respond to it. But then comes all the AI stuff as well. And there's a lot of low hanging fruit. There are a lot of obvious things that, uh, I would almost say all consumers are almost expecting to already have that most don't.

Uh, there's just so, so many obvious things where, where AI could have responded to my. My email about what the bigger engine would cost, right? Yeah, for sure. Uh, so, so those are some of the things that, of course, we are building, but I think are going to be expected within the next year. We got that with the mobile phone, didn't we?

Where the capacitive interface, the glass taking away the keyboard. It was a good example where Apple did redefine the model and everybody said, I don't want [00:29:00] anything. But that and all the other manufacturers had to move to that position and it's that which well, the first one to do it that creates it will set the new standard and will be off.

So it's a game changer as well because managing asynchronous communication through all the channels is really complicated and there's loads of instances like you say, where it's just missed the bell goes awry, whatever, you know, blah, blah, blah. Um, so it is, it is again, going back to my first point about.

Innovation. It is a necessity, so people will want it and use it. Absolutely. Yeah. And I think, I think there's a lot of those, those things that are not necessarily just about one company defining it and being first. I think there's a lot of them that are just obvious that just have to happen. Uh, now that we have, for example, AI, there's just some, some, some, some things that are so obvious in our industry and our, our product category that we have to build and that I know all our competitors are building as well.

Maybe just to bring our conversation to a bit of a close for today, if you were advising. An [00:30:00] organization who was thinking about the sort of services that you're delivering and you're building, but they haven't yet got their heads around what kind of digital telecommunications strategy is going to be.

Where do you, where do you start with, like, rethinking how you might do this sort of communications? Well, so. I think there's a lot of, of, of questions to ask yourself is what, what are my needs? How do I today contact or, or talk to my, my clients? Uh, what are, what are the means I use today, but also think a little bit ahead.

What, what do I think, what could I see my clients use, uh, when they talk to their friends and family and then find a platform that can kind of support all those different, uh, angles at the same time without you having to do the, the, the lifting, you know, you need to find something that, That does that for you so you can focus on doing whatever your business does.

Um, that's the main thing. I think, you know, there's, there's some, some AI things that you have to, to take into consideration, you can't uninvent [00:31:00] AI it's here now. So if you don't. You know, get on it, then you need to, you know, find another job. I would almost say, because your competitors are definitely going to get on it, no matter what industry you're in.

What have you been looking at this week, Sjoukje? So each week I do some research on related ideas in transformation and tech. And this week I thought we should take a look at AI in the music industry. So AI is revolutionizing the music industry by transforming how music is created, produced, consumed and experienced.

With AI Power Tools, musicians can write, record and mix music more efficiently, while fans benefit from person like listening experiences and the discovery of new artists and genres. But even though AI has been very beneficial, it also brings challenges like copyright issues with AI made music and the rise of deep fakes.[00:32:00]

And this had led to discussions about who owns data and how AI should be used ethically. So a question, How do you see the future of AI in the music industry? Like any other industry, uh, you can't un invent it, so you have to adapt it. It's like, um, I usually compare it to, you know, saddle makers back in the early 1900s that were making saddles, and we were always going to have a great job because there's always going to be a need for saddles, and then someone invented the car, and then they didn't have jobs unless they started making upholstery, and then you had great jobs.

Good jobs, right? You need to adapt. And, uh, same thing with music. Uh, I have, uh, most of my friends are still in the music industry and, and, and some of them are like, no, no, no, no, no. AI can never make things that are as good as what, what, what humans can. And then the last couple of months they've started being okay.

Maybe I need to figure out what to do, um, because it's getting really good. The thing I heard that I found quite disturbing is I'm into music, I'm [00:33:00] an avid listener of music and, uh, you know, buy a vinyl and things like that. And the thing, the thing that concerned me about this, whilst, whilst I definitely buy your point that it absolutely, it absolutely is like every industry, you can't un invent it, it's going to impact it, whether you like it or not.

Um, the thing that did bother me with that, whether you heard that one of the streamers, uh, the, the streaming services, I'll, I'll leave it anonymous, but they'd started to put AI generated tracks. Into their library. So then when you were listening to auto generated playlists, for example, you know, when you just let it play and it's creating a selection for you based on your listening habits that it was then embedding a I music into that, into that kind of stream of music that you're listening to, which and then not declaring that I think if that was declared.

That's entirely fine and I can see a whole genre of, of, of, you know, AI created music to me, though, there is a differentiation there [00:34:00] between human created and AI created. Now, I don't know whether I'm just saying that as a, you know, like a 59, a 50 to 59 year old actually aged myself. Bloody hell. That was a bit progressive.

Um, a 52 year old guy. Um, And, and, you know, just not getting my head around the idea

that, you know, can I, is, is AI based music, something that I'm interested in listening to, or whether, whether there's something legitimately there. So after the invention of the motor car, Dave, people had to stand in front of the car as it went down a street with a flag waving it.

So people didn't get run over and it was a natural reaction to something new as. Crop tops of the rise and I wonder if at the beginning will ask for it to be declared and left to be registered but it will eventually just integrated itself into our lives and be commonplace and it's a generational thing potentially but yeah, unfortunately now we don't have the people walking in front of the car with the flags and they weren't allowed to go more than two miles an hour and all sorts of stuff and it's like we self limit whilst we don't [00:35:00] understand it and it's a natural reaction I think do you do you not draw a distinction between.

Creation of a mechanical device, which all be very complicated. I'm not in any way being pejorative about that from the creation of like art in inverted commas. Is there? Is there a differentiation there? Do you think? I don't know. It's the I think it's the next evolution of Creativity and we'll just have to get used to it.

The genie's out of the ball, right? So you can try and regulate, but you can't cause it's like, you can't control it. So it's going to happen. I think, I think maybe there's a way that if we want to, we can detect it. And there's a lot of research development going into detecting AI generated content. But I think over time it'll just blend into the background like everything else.

I do see that coming and that if it's good music, it's good music. It doesn't matter if an algorithm created it because a human created the algorithm or if a human created it, it's just. We like to listen to it. It gives us entertainment. Why do you wonder what will happen with the royalties when you have [00:36:00] AI generated music?

But, the thing is you, for, first of all, you don't make a distinction of whether a song was recorded on a computer and had synthesizers on it. Or it was played all live instruments, right? That's not something you, you, you consider today. And in terms of royalties, no one gets royalties.

I mean, it's no problem. The, the, the, the, the, the, the prompt to maybe get to watch it. But the thing is. It's it's everything is based off of something else like all songs you hear today are not completely genuinely new things that is all based on something else. It's based on things that someone heard, you know, sounds different, all these different impressions.

And that's exactly what AI is. It's based on everything else. It hears man. But do you think that the leaps that. That have been made creatively in the arts that we we we it is a it is a natural [00:37:00] Evolutionary progression that humans will step back from that and be comfortable with that then becoming Technically created or do you just see it all coexisting?

Yeah, yeah, it's not either or it doesn't mean that that humans can't make art anymore. Uh, it's not one. One doesn't eliminate the other, but I don't think we can eliminate AI generated content. So, uh, I think that we have to coexist and it's I think it's how you measure entertainment. Yeah. So there was a big.

Backlash with the green screens in sci fi films and things like this. When the original Star Wars came out, every says it's ruining cinema. And we got used to it and we merged it all in and we find it entertaining it. So great. If you like to listen to it, then you're as long as you get an enjoyment from it.

Yeah, I'm the generation that had, you know, cartoons that were hand drawn when I was

a kid and then kind of during my teenage years experienced the first animated now and everything today is animated on a computer, all the all the movies, animation movies and cartoon [00:38:00] stuff, you know, so that's that's a natural thing.

In the beginning, it felt like, well, this is a whole different genre. It's its own little thing. But not anymore. Well, that's a depressing That's a depressing chat, wasn't it? Not depressing from if you're on the other side of it! It's just happening! Come on, Dave. You're worse than Marcel this week about being a Luddite.

It's like, get with the program! Come on! We should all go back to vinyl. I'm more than comfortable with Sinsan Electronica. You know, like, that's all That's all fine. Good God. Honestly. Well, look. Seriously, Peter. A very good conversation today and thought provoking and great stories. Thank you so much for spending some time with us this morning.

Thank you so much for having me. That was fun. Now we end every episode of this podcast, at least while the humans are in charge of it, um, by asking our guests what they're excited about doing next. Whether that's, you know, you've got a great plan for the weekend or whether you do something in your professional life.

So Peter, what are you excited [00:39:00] about doing next? I'm actually excited for the weekend coming up. I'm going to not work and I'm going to be with my kids and just literally do whatever they want to do. Oh, wonderful. Wonderful. Me too, by the way. I can't wait for the weekend. It's been a long week this week.

So a huge thanks to our guests this week. Peter, thank you so much for being on the show. Thanks to our producer Marcel, our sound and editing wizards, Ben and Louis, and of course, to all of our listeners.

We're on LinkedIn and X, Dave Chapman, Rob Kernahan, and Sjoukje Zaal. Feel free to follow or connect with us and please get in touch if you have any comments or ideas for the show. And of course, if you haven't already done that, rate and subscribe to our podcast.

See you in another reality next week[00:40:00]

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