



Which tech trends do you think have been overhyped in recent years? □ Will they ever live up to the hype?

It's hard to say when things are "overhyped," but there is obviously a lot of buzz around the Social Enterprise. The technology industry has proven over and over again that it can “grow into” the hype – I think it is more a matter of timing than of delivery. It is important for businesses and individual professionals to look beyond the industry chatter, and adopt specific use cases of social solutions that support their business goals.

Social constructs will dramatically change the way businesses relate to customers and prospects. But social paradigms have to be thoughtfully integrated into existing ways of doing business rather than being viewed purely as something new and different. Social technologies are driving a shift in the way we relate and communicate. But, at the end of the day, every business interaction still comes down to people dealing with people based on trust, knowledge and brand—all concepts that existed before social networks. At InsideView we focus on how social changes one-to-one customer conversations—not in isolation but as an additional knowledge and interaction dimension. The social enterprise concepts will live up to the hype the day we'll no longer talk about social as a trend, and instead blend social into the way we do business every day.

In 2020, looking back on this decade, what will be the single most impactful technical advancement driving business growth?

By 2020 businesses will be focusing beyond infrastructure and workflow automation, onto the

analytics that bring insights and intelligence. We have already gone through this transition as consumers. (Ten years ago I used computers for communication and computation. Today I mostly use them as information systems that help me figure out where to go, how to get there, what my friends are thinking, what the key stories are in the world, which movie I should watch next and the best television to watch it on.) While businesses are still mostly using computing as infrastructure and workflow automation, many are increasingly focusing on analytics as a way to extract business insights and improve performance.

As an industry, we can only automate our businesses and improve costs and efficiency for so long. Most of those gains have been achieved. Moving forward, competitive advantage won't come from having a better CRM or ERP implementation; it'll come from having more informed employees who have the relevant business insights at their fingertips. A company's value is no longer defined by hard assets. It's defined by how effectively employees spend their time, and by their ability to be more relevant to customers. Analytics will become required infrastructure because it enables employees to be more relevant and effective.

Social media and social business are big themes for 2012. In which areas of business will the social movement have the most impact (or most potential for impact)? Why?

I think the biggest impact will be in 3 areas: customer acquisition, collaboration (intra- and extra-enterprise), and customer service.

In all three cases, engagement and collaboration are the keys to productivity increases and success, and the social paradigm is ideally suited to facilitate better engagement and collaboration. In the areas of customer acquisition and service, the social web has broken down information barriers and facilitated better customer relationships. Today, customers and prospects put themselves, their ideas, and their needs out there for all to see. This social information makes customer interactions more relevant and productive.

Social insight is everywhere on the web, but only a tiny percentage of businesses know how to find and leverage it systematically. Those that do so first will have a huge competitive advantage over the laggards.

This interview was published in [SIIA's Vision from the Top](#) , a Software Division publication released at [All About the Cloud](#) 2012.