

We're moving to an era of ubiquitous computing and ambient intelligence: Satya Nadella

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Satya Nadella, Microsoft CEO - REUTERS

Satya Nadella, speaking at Microsoft India's annual flagship Microsoft Future Ready event shared his views on digitisation and the trends shaping the future of organisations overall

Hybrid work, hyperconnected business, multi cloud, multi edge computing and zero trust security are some of the trends that will define the future of business, according to Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft.

Nadella, speaking at Microsoft India's annual flagship Microsoft Future Ready event shared his views on digitisation and the trends shaping the future of organisations overall.

"How you sell, how you support customers, how you market, how you manufacture, how you connect with your employees. It's all undergoing a sea change," Nadella said at the event.

"Fundamentally, we're moving from a mobile and cloud era to an era of ubiquitous computing and ambient intelligence, an era in which we'll experience more digitization over the next 10 years than the last 40," he said.

Nadella talked about the trends that are transforming every company.

"It starts with a new world of hybrid work. We are seeing change in how we work when we work and where our work gets done. More and more people are also asking that very fundamental question, why we work. This leads to two challenges that we call the hybrid paradox, and the great reshuffle," he said.

"When it comes to hybrid work, there is no standard and flexibility will be key. Productivity and flexibility, though, are not mutually exclusive. Every organisation needs a new digital fabric for collaboration that brings together both digital and physical spaces," he further added.

The second trend transforming companies, according to the Microsoft CEO, is building a hyper connected business.

"A sweeping business process transformation is underway. Over the past year and a half, we talked about how we had to pivot sales and customer service manufacturing to be remote ready. Going forward, this will just be built in by design," he said.

"We need that next level of real time hyperconnectivity between businesses and between consumers and businesses where data and intelligence flow freely to tackle the challenges of supply and demand. In fact, by 2025, it's projected that sales and marketing processes will involve more proactive engagement than reactive once all the way from customer marketing to supply chain," he added.

Nadella further added that every business is becoming a digital business where building their own digital capability will be of paramount importance.

"Computing is becoming distributed and embedded in the real world. And the application models are transforming rapidly to run on the edge with new ambient intelligent capabilities. The percentage of industrial control systems that will include analytics and AI inference capabilities at the edge will increase by six fold in the next four years," he said.

"Going forward, every organization will need a more distributed, more intelligent, more autonomous computing fabric, one that they can use to rapidly build, manage and deploy applications anywhere. And they will need new tools that bring together both pro developers and domain experts," he added.

Nadella further emphasised the importance of end to end security amid digital transformation.

"Cybersecurity is the biggest threat to digital transformation today and it's the number one risk facing every business going forward," he said.

His sentiments were echoed by Anant Maheshwari, President, Microsoft India who said, "Trusted and secure tech is at the core of accelerating tech innovation in the country. And we are deeply invested in building a trusted tech ecosystem. We think of trust as comprising these six elements: security, reliability, privacy, compliance, ethics, and transparency."

Maheshwari also talked about the maturing digital ecosystem in India and talked about how the startup ecosystem and the SaaS (software-as-a service) industry in India is growing.

"India's advantage is that it was already well on its way with digital, and the two years of the pandemic have solved to accelerate how India can play a leading role for the next normal of the planet. These three words are core to driving growth for India, and for the world," he said.

"A digitally native customer is a trend line that will reshape all industries. It is estimated that India's consumer digital economy, which was pegged at a sizable \$85 to \$90 billion dollars in the calendar year 2020, is now expected to become 10 times at more than \$800 billion market by 2030," he further added.

Microsoft in Metaverse

Nadella also shared the company's plans for the metaverse. Microsoft had jumped on the metaverse bandwagon, with two new announcements at its Ignite 2021 event last year pertaining to "the evolution into the metaverse." The tech giant had announced a new solution, Mesh for Teams in 2022.

Positioned as the "gateway to the metaverse," the solution is meant to enable users to be present in a meeting using personalised avatars and immersive spaces that can be accessed from any device, with no special equipment needed.

"As the digital and physical worlds come together, we are creating an entirely new platform layer, which is the metaverse. We're bringing people places and things together with the digital world in both the consumer space as well as in the enterprise," Nadella said.

"In a sense, the metaverse enables us to embed computing into the real world, and to embed the real world into computing, bringing real presence to any digital space. For years, we've talked about creating this digital representation of the world. But now we actually have the opportunity to go in to that world and participate in it," he said.

Nadella further shared how Microsoft is building upon its metaverse plan by building various platform capabilities into its own first party applications to enable immersive experiences and collaboration.

"All of the trends I've talked about today, so far, whether it's the hybrid work hyperconnected business, multi cloud, multi edge computing, or zero trust security requires a boundary less digital ecosystem where trust between different parties needs to be established in real time," Nadella said.

"We're building the identity system of the future, a connective network that enables people, organisations, apps, and even smart things to make real time access decisions," he further added.