The Digitization of Work just Accelerated in These 4 Areas

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2020 didn't change the future of work, it just hit the gas pedal.

Ask anyone to list the ways 2020 has changed the world and that list will get long (and strange) fast.

Bread maker sales are through the roof while the travel industry is quaking in its boots. Stars quite literally disappeared without becoming supernovas. And thousands of minks rose from the grave.

And, of course, the way we all do business shifted drastically.

The pandemic forced many companies to go remote at a moment's notice. It accelerated adoption of tools that support online work, like Zoom and Slack (both of which have seen record growth this year). It pushed companies toward the cloud, where they could easily support remote and distributed teams and scale up or down quickly. And it illuminated how vital it is to have good digital workflows, no matter what type of business you run.

For some, these changes feel seismic. But the truth is this: Those changes were already coming. Businesses were already moving to the cloud at a fast clip. Remote work was already growing year-over-year. Demand for tools that enable distributed teams was on the upswing. And we already knew that digital workflows were the way of the future.

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>
> **GIGI GRIFFIS**
> Content Strategist & Copywriter

The truth is that Covid-19 didn't change the future of work. It just accelerated the changes that were already happening. Here are four key ways the pandemic accelerated the future we were already speeding toward.

1. Remote work and distributed teams

At the end of 2019, before Covid-19 hit our collective consciousness, 4.7 million Americans were already working remotely. Twenty-six percent said they'd previously quit a job because it didn't support remote work. And 80 percent put remote or flex work at the top of their list of perks they wanted from an employer.

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So, while the pandemic may have forced employers to go remote with little notice, that

was already the way the proverbial wind was blowing. And employers that weren't open to remote workers or distributed teams were already missing out. The data tells us that remote work makes us more productive, saves money, gives companies access to more talent, and improves employee satisfaction.

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

Long before the pandemic, InVision was committed to getting remote work right. This nearly 800-person company serving over 5 million users is fully remote. That's right: no offices. No headquarters. Just under 800 people across 20+ countries and 40+ states working, collaborating, and serving customers fully online.

The company believes in the value of remote work – with or without Covid-19 restrictions forcing its hand. After all, remote work saves them money, keeps productivity high, and offers a better work-life balance. And while other companies were scrambling to go remote this year, InVision already had the processes, systems, culture, tech tools, and know-how in place for their teams to keep working seamlessly, pandemic or not.

2. Moving to the cloud

Within 12 months, 50 percent of enterprise workloads will be in the public cloud, according to Flexera's 2020 State of the Cloud Report. And even before the pandemic, 61 percent of respondents said they were planning a cloud migration.

As with remote work (and, in part, because of remote work), the pandemic simply made these already-planned moves even more urgent, increasing asset migration speed by a factor of 24, according to research by McKinsey.

While some companies were racing to move assets to the cloud at a pace 24 times faster than anticipated, companies already using the cloud also had to readjust their expectations. Just a couple months into the pandemic, 59 percent of enterprises said they expected their cloud use to exceed what they'd planned for in 2020.

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> **DAMIEN GRAY**
> Principal Laser Optics Engineer, EOS North America

One company that made this quick shift was EOS North America. As their Principal Laser Optics Engineer, Damien Gray, told us in a recent TechValidate survey of 320 Atlassian customers: "Our primary reason for migrating was to support remote users better. This [was crucial] during the COVID-19 crisis, as we were able to reach our code in a secure manner without using company VPNs."

Nextiva, a leading business communications company, moved to the cloud to support their rapid growth and open the door for future scaling – something that wasn't easy to do on a server deployment.

Since making the switch, they've significantly improved efficiency and system performance, while saving at least 100 hours and between $50,000-$100,000 in software costs each year. Now, the team finally has the freedom to focus on delivering value for customers instead of managing internal processes and technology – a key advancement that will help them continue to scale while maintaining the level of service they're known for.

As Josh Costella, Senior Atlassian Solutions Specialist, explains: "We were faced with a choice: scale ourselves by moving to Data Center, which would incur higher costs and effort, or depend on Atlassian for all of our hosting needs and have peace of mind moving forward. We chose the latter."

3. Real-time conversational tools

In early 2019, Slack was already reporting over 10 million daily active users, and Zoom was already adding nearly 2 million users per year. Then, the pandemic hit and – unsurprisingly – these wildly successful remote communication tools skyrocketed in popularity for both business and pleasure, with uses ranging from brainstorming meetings to knitting circles. Both tech companies reported record numbers in 2020.

This is another leap forward that should come as no surprise. As remote work and real-time collaboration grow, so does the need for tools to support real-time conversations, support, and networking. 2020 may have floored the gas pedal, but this product category was always going to be the future of work.

As collaboration goes remote and real-time, so too does support – be it IT, HR, legal, or compliance. And if you can find a way to integrate support into the tools you already use – like Slack and Microsoft Teams – that support will feel seamless. It'll also blow your typical metrics out of the water.

We know because that's exactly what Slack did when it adopted Atlassian's new tool: Halp. They synced IT support with their thriving Slack channels and improved their average handle time by a whopping 50 percent.

4. Digital workflows

Whether you're sitting six feet away from your supervisor or halfway around the world, digital workflows have always made work smoother, faster, and more cost effective. And like everything else this year, the pandemic made that fact even clearer.

In fact, people are now three times more likely to say at least 80 percent of their customer interactions are digital, compared to pre-pandemic, according to McKinsey. And the adoption of advanced tech for categories like Ops and business decision-making software are up by a factor of 25.

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

Long before the pandemic hit, smart companies were digitizing and optimizing their workflows to save money, increase productivity, improve collaboration, and speed up their processes. And many of these digital leaders were already seeing staggering results.

For example, The Telegraph used Atlassian tools to bring their IT service management in-house and improved time to resolution by 66%, reduced call-waiting time by 50%, and increased customer satisfaction by 140%.

Our advice for 2021: optimize the changes that 2020 brought

2020 was the time for fast and, perhaps, unexpected changes. It was time to speed up cloud migrations, embrace a fully remote workforce, digitize any unwieldy workflows, and implement tools that made real-time collaboration simpler – whether in the office or from your couch.

As the year winds down, it's clear that most (if not all) of these changes are here to stay. Sure, some of us may go back to the office, but others won't. Some companies may still have on-premise servers, but many were already planning a move to cloud. And now that many companies have migrated to cloud, they'll most likely be sticking around. After all, based on a TechValidate survey of 320 Atlassian customers, 90 percent of customers who moved from on-prem to cloud recommend making the switch.

If these changes are here to stay, it only makes sense that 2021 is the time to fully embrace them, audit them, and optimize them. As we slide from one year to the next, we strongly recommend that if you made quick changes, you take the time to

evaluate them for opportunities to optimize and secure everything from speed to cost savings to security.

Start by gathering info and evaluating the changes, asking questions like:

- What changes did we make in 2020?

- Are there any wonky workarounds we put in place that could be smoothed out to save time, money, or computing power?

- What is working well?

- What isn't working well yet – and why not?

- Do teams need additional training?

- Are the tools we chose actually the best for our teams? If not, what other tools are out there? If so, is there any way to optimize our existing tools further to support our unique business needs?

- Are all our new tools integrating seamlessly or could they be better?

- Are our processes fully digital? If not, can they be?

- Are processes and simple tasks automated, or can they be?

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