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**Without a network,
digitization is just the
“telephone game.”**



Germany's network expansion will do more than spawn new applications. Networks will develop intelligence of their own.

By contrast, **Kevin Parikh**, a digitization expert, has rather unconventional ideas about how this new digital brain can be leveraged for everyone's benefit.

The Optimist

COPY — Anja Steinbuch

Digitization is more than just a technological phenomenon. Kevin Parikh remembers the social aspect, too. He believes that digital singularity will be good for people. After all, he knows how it works. "Rather than spending time on mundane everyday formalities, like driving to the bank or grocery store, wouldn't you prefer to have more time for your spouse or children?"

"Well, yes." Parikh's questions elicit automatic nods from his listeners. The futurist and thought leader explains quickly and clearly why artificial intelligence and machine learning will be good for mankind. When you talk to him about the digital future, you immediately want to be part of it.

Digital singularity is the point where technology and the human experience converge. By that, researchers mean the moment when artificial intelligence has advanced to the point where it improves in an ever-accelerating spiral and becomes a superbrain itself. It's one of the buzzwords in the business.

As recently as in February of this year, at the World Government Summit in Dubai, Tesla founder Elon Musk held a powerful speech warning his audience about this trend: "We humans need to become cyborgs with artificial and biological intelligence tools to avoid becoming the 'house cats' of vastly more intelligent AI." He also claims that many jobs will be destroyed or taken over by robots. However, they wouldn't do a better job than humans.

Parikh does not believe in this grim scenario. "Artificial intelligence will empower humankind, not destroy it." He sees himself in the vein of futurist Ray Kurzweil, who coined the term "technical singularity" and founded Singularity University.

It is his analytical, yet all-embracing view of people's questions and fears that inspires trust. He is writing a book on the topic of digital singularity that focuses on "a case for humanity". He explains, "My grandfather used to hide his money in the wall, under the wallpaper. He didn't trust banks." And today? Online banking is used by virtually everyone. When the telephone was invented 150 years ago, people feared that it would just lure office workers into wasting time. And today, do you know of anyone who still works without the Internet? There may be a time in the future when, similarly, it's nearly impossible to get by without

a digital twin, a digital doppelgänger which manages and monitors all your personal data online.

Parikh, a lawyer and economist, kicked off his consulting career in Bill Clinton's government team in the late 1990s. As the husband and father remembers, "Even back then, I was calming people's fears about digital communications."

Now, he organizes digital transformation processes – often quite innovative ones. He is convinced that "if you don't use the new technologies for your business, you won't survive." In the US, nearly all the 'old economy' companies have successfully digitized their business models. "Everything is pointing toward maximum integration of data technologies." For example, Avasant, the leading management consulting firm founded by Kevin in 2006, recently designed a system that collects and analyzes data on travelers and airlines for an airport operator. A virtual coach welcomes travelers at the terminal and accompanies them to their seats on the plane. "That provides much more security for everyone," Parikh promises.

His theory of socially and economically compatible digitization strikes a balance between multiple poles: hyper convergence tightly integrates devices, platforms, software and users. "This produces entirely new digital moments," Parikh explains. With the help of a digital twin, all personal data can be managed and monitored online. Parikh promises that "our digital twin will think like us and act exclusively in our interest." Our digital twin takes care of financial transactions and signs insurance applications. It even handles our estate after its flesh-and-blood twin passes away. Augmented reality lets people see things in much greater detail and complexity. Transboundary communities form, connecting people on the basis of their personal and professional commonalities. This approach can perfect the Customer First strategy, too. "Companies will align themselves with the end of the value chain." In the future, only the customer will decide what a product should look like and what it should be able to do based on their preferences," said Parikh. And it's all possible thanks to 3D printing and similar methods.



BIO

Kevin S. Parikh is a noted expert and thought leader on digital and business transformation in the United States. He received a bachelor's degree in economics and political science from the University of California and his Juris Doctor from American University. In his career, the US citizen has worked for consulting outfits KPMG and Gartner. Today, Parikh is Global CEO and Senior Partner at Avasant, an international sourcing expert. Parikh lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two children.