

# IT vision 2020

## About foxes, active walls and a new life in the countryside

I wake up before the alarm clock goes off today. It's just about 5 o'clock and the sun is already shining behind the roller blind. An exquisite morning. The lake is as smooth as a mirror. Suddenly a fox runs across the field. It stops in its tracks, gives a sniff and turns around. With an inquisitive gaze it looks straight at my kitchen window.

The house is pleasantly quiet. The coffee is steaming in the cup and I stream the latest geology research findings from our active wall. As I'm lecturing on heavy rain and risk of collapse straight after lunch, a few recent examples are always good to have. I find one from Cuba that I drag onto my own presentation. My existence as a business owner and consultant is exceptionally smooth these days.

On the family side of the wall I receive a message telling me that my aging mother in town has just woken up. She sees me immediately on her wall; I wave and tell her about the fox. She laughs, the fox is her favourite animal. I then surprise her by pouring an espresso from her new coffee machine. It's nice for us siblings to be able to keep a check. She's soon 90 after all and a bit tottery and forgetful. Mother also has contact with the district nurse via her wall who checks the dosage of the blood pressure medicine and ensures that mother does her limbering up exercises.

On Saturday, mother and I are meeting to buy her a new cardigan through the hologram service, which saves her the hassle of wriggling about in a fitting cubicle and she can see

which models fit her best. Via our logistics system she can either fetch it at her distribution centre or have it delivered. Perhaps I could find a new dress for the conference banquet next month. The international hologram account connected to my Visa card allows me to request suggestions for suitable models from my favourite online stores. One is located in Singapore where I can also get made-to-measure garments.

Technology has made rapid advances in the past ten years. After the broadband reform it was as though everything matured. Fear and scepticism went over to insight and delight over all the opportunities provided. And I felt that my family could finally take the step of moving into the countryside.

The rest of the family are beginning to wake up. Oscar, 13, is as drowsy as always. Luckily he can take it easy, school doesn't start until 10. Today it's parallel learning with a rural school in Australia. This month's theme is life skills and English. The pupils work together comparing and learning from each other's behaviour and experiences. They chat, work on video diaries and give each other case scenarios to ponder over. Oscar has taken a fancy to a girl called Sharon. She's a sheep farmer's daughter and her wall is full of sheep farming instruction apps.





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In our village there are five 12-14 year olds who share a classroom in the community centre. Their school is miles away. The entire class of 23 are spread out in the communities along the river. Depending on the subject, teaching alternates between the community centre and school. When they have art and creative writing they can choose to sit at home or take their digital paper and seek inspiration anywhere they choose. The art teacher is linked to all their papers and can offer tips and advice on perspectives and choice of colour. Oscar is good at drawing, when I tell him about the fox his eyes light up and he quickly sketches a few lines on the wall just to hold on to the moment. He drags the sketch down to his wallet and continues to ponder.

I usually go along on the days that the class has online connected teaching. I take my job with me and am never restricted now that the files are stored in the cloud.

I usually sit in the large room where the classroom is visible, but when I have calls to make I use the small workrooms. Presence in the community centre is important, even a quiet class can get rowdy at times. The adults in the village have a joint schedule where you book yourself in when you can. This is not usually a problem since most people can work mobile.

My husband wakes up last of all. Quite rightly too as he was on call last night. He's a doctor and manages a fair amount from his practice here in the house. The e-health feature in the digital wallet that everybody has makes it easy to share your journal with your GP. As soon as somebody contacts him, their history is loaded up together with basic info like pulse and temperature. Sometimes he says he has finished the diag-

nosis before the person calling has even said hello.

His job is at the health centre in the same location as the school. He often assists patients with echocardiography in real time with the university hospital. The patient avoids having to travel there but still has access to specialists. Together they draw up a treatment programme that is easy for my husband to follow up. The basic idea is for the healthy doctor to travel to the sick patients with the help of technology. Once upon a time it was the opposite, however strange that may sound.

I'd better hurry up. My audience will soon be sitting at their walls at home or in their workplaces. Apparently a short course at Milan University is also attending. My distributor has made a good sell this time. The more I can fill my lectures the less I need to work! Jokes aside, I put on my boots and walk across to the large stones that remain from the inland ice. The scenery is astounding there. And the light. It's almost magical and I know it's always appreciated if I begin the lecture there. I feel like David Attenborough when I begin by welcoming everybody. The difference is that this is in real time.

Suddenly the fox turns up again. It has sneaked up on to one of the boulders and is staring down at me. I don't see it at first, but my audience does. When murmurs start sounding in my headset I understand that it must be something special. Dave, who despite the late hour is taking part from Los Angeles, says he would also like to live in the countryside. You're close to everything, he says with envy in his voice. I know, I reply feeling a warm glow inside.

Technology has taught me that only our imagination sets limits to what is possible. This is just the beginning.

