



EMBRACING TECH IN FINANCIAL SERVICES EPISODE: INCREASED PERSONALISATION WITHOUT INCREASED DIGITAL CLUTTER?

TRANSCRIPT

Host: Tim Broome,
Technology Advisory
Practice Lead, Financial
Services, Accenture
Australia and New
Zealand

Guest: [Bronwyn van der](#)
[Merwe](#), General Manager
Asia Pacific, Fjord.

Tim: Rapid technology growth in innovation has generated enormous digital clutter. It's noisy, it's distracting, and you're probably thinking twice about sharing your data. Join me

as we explore the relationship between human behaviour, technology, and business in the latest [Fjord trends](#).

Presenter: Welcome to Embracing Technology in Financial Services, a podcast brought to you by Accenture. In this 16-part series, we will hear from experts to uncover the latest in technology and trends in Financial Services. Now, here's your host, our practice lead, Tim Broome.

Tim: Good day, everybody. This is a conversation I've been looking forward to for a long time. We are out of the Accenture office and we're in the Fjord studio this week, and I'm joined today by Bronwyn van der Merwe who is the APAC (Asia Pacific) lead at [Fjord](#).

Bronwyn: Hi Tim, it's lovely to be here. Thanks for having me.



Tim: Great to see you again. Last time I saw you was, you were speaking at a conference, and I actually don't know how you find time in your day because you speak at a lot of conferences. You were talking about a self-driving car kit.

Bronwyn: Yes. So, the context for this... I was talking about the accelerating pace of change. We've got all this amazing new technology being available to people, but it's much cheaper, and so we're seeing people combine all these technologies really rapidly. We've had lots of investment in self-driving cars in the last 10 years, but this guy has enabled customers to turn any car into a self-driving car with a kit that costs \$1000 made from things that you can buy in any hardware shop. It's amazing.

Tim: It's crazy.

Bronwyn: Yeah.

Tim: Bronwyn, you're the APAC (Asia Pacific) lead of Fjord, and you mentioned the connection between Fjord and Accenture. For anybody who doesn't know, what is Fjord?

Bronwyn: Yes, sure. So, Fjord is a design and innovation capability. We're a part of Accenture. We were acquired about five years ago. We work with clients to design services that customers will love. So, thinking about all of the touch points that a customer has with a brand, whether that's a digital channel or a core central or retail environment, or anything else. We work with our clients to really understand customers, understand employees, and think about how we can design those interactions and those touch points so that they're really simple, fast, effective, and deliver value.

Tim: I just love the way that you and your team... you just approach the problem from a very, very different angle than I do. I intend to focus on how is this technology going to solve a problem, which is completely the opposite end of your lens.

Bronwyn: Absolutely. We flip the thinking and we start with the messy irrational human beings at the centre. Try and understand exactly what it is that they're trying to do, understand their context, talk to them, involve them, and then

involve lots of other stakeholders. Through that process, we uncover insights that help us to design the right solution for those people. And then we'll look at "What are the opportunities that tech can enable for us to better solve this problem for the human being?" It's very human centred.

Tim: And Fjord, every year, releases a set of trends. Accenture releases trends, but I know the Fjord trends are... that there's overlaps with the Accenture trends, but you take a very, very different lens on that and a different viewpoint. What's the overarching view on the trends that you've seen this year?

Bronwyn: We have seven trends this year, but the meta-theme that connects all the trends is really the search for value. We've had two decades of rapid technological advances and that has put a lot of new things into our world; new digital things, new physical things. I think we're sort of slightly groaning under the pressure of all of this. Huge amount of digital clutter, huge amount of competing brands, products and services in our lives which we're trying to navigate, but also the impact on the environment of all of these new products and services, and instant on-demand everything. We sort of feel that both humans as consumers and also humans as business operators, are starting to question the value of digital, and ask just tougher questions about it.

As individuals, we're, I think, starting to be... curate a little bit more which brands and digital experiences we let into our lives. But also as business leaders, I think we're starting to really question the ROI on the digital ventures and really seek to accelerate the value that we're getting out of those, and think about how we can have confidence in the bets that we're placing in terms of our digital investments to really make sure that they're going to deliver what we need them to deliver.

Tim: Can I just take you back to... you mentioned digital clutter?

Bronwyn: Yes.

Tim: I love that term because that's my life.

Bronwyn: Mine too, absolutely.



Tim: It just feels as though there is just a wall of noise constantly hitting us. I think one of the trends is silence is gold. Can we just dive into what that is, and where you see this heading?

Bronwyn: Absolutely. So, this is the recognition that we have access to amazing technology to really understand who customers are and deliver very targeted experiences to them. But there's a risk that we use that without the real understanding of who the human being is at the end, and the context of their lives, and start to just sort of bombard people. And so we're seeing that consumers are starting to unsubscribe and deselect and opt out of digital services that aren't delivering them value.

For myself, I have signed up to something called unroll.me, which is an e-mail service that goes through your inbox, your personal inbox, and it looks for all of the subscriptions and it basically can automatically unsubscribe you with one click, or roll them up into a single e-mail. It's just de-cluttered my inbox and got rid of all this spam that I've been getting.

Tim: We're trying to... or, I think a lot of the e-mail solutions out there, are trying to figure out how to do that without actually unsubscribing; we're just trying to filter out the noise.

Bronwyn: Yes.

Tim: But there's always that risk of are things which are critical to me being filtered out.

Bronwyn: Yeah, absolutely it is. But I think because we have such a barrage of so many different channels to connect us and communicate with us, you know. I think about my own life and I've got e-mail, and Teams, and Slack, and WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger, and, and, and. There's just so much, I can't keep track of which conversation is happening on which device, and so I think we need tools to help us manage this. As a result, we as consumers are taking the risk that we might miss out on a particular very important e-mail, and actually take the efficiency and the help that some of these tools can provide in terms of doing some of this initial sorting for us, just to make our lives simpler and to give us back more time. I think we are seeing consumers starting to push back. We're seeing

digital dieting. My dad, just the other day, was telling me how-

Tim: Digital dieting?

Bronwyn: Digital dieting, where people go and they want to detox. They go on holidays and they'd find places where there is no wifi, just so that they can turn it all off and have a break.

Tim: But that's hard as well.

Bronwyn: Yeah.

Tim: Because there's always that bit in the back of your mind that thinks, "Am I missing out on something?" There's that constant stream of information and this fear of missing out, which I think is why we... you know, you just keep swiping at the screen.

Bronwyn: There is that fear of missing out, but I think people are getting beyond that. I think people are starting to make choices that... like my father, he puts his phone on airplane mode of an evening out and he's found it so liberating just to say, "Actually, enough. I don't want any more notifications," and people are turning off all the notifications, all the little red badges and everything else, on their phones.

What we're seeing is that the tech giants like your Facebooks and others are starting to recognise this backlash and are creating a new way of reaching out to customers, which they're calling 'mindful design'. You might have noticed that the algorithms on social feeds are changing, so it's not just about that endless mindless scrolling. It's actually around high quality engagement. For example, Instagram now tells you, "You're all caught up." You get that little line that tells you you're all caught up? I don't know if you're an Instagram user?

Tim: I was on Instagram.

Bronwyn: No?

Tim: And then I moved away from Instagram.



Bronwyn: So, it now tells you when you've completed and you're all caught up, and you get the little notifications now on how many minutes you spent per day on Instagram. And then you've got Apple and Android sending you the weekly screen times that you're getting. You're seeing the tech giants actually starting to help people to manage the digital clutter in their lives.

Tim: Yeah, I understand Microsoft has backed a company called Mindful Tech?

Bronwyn: Yes, yes. I don't know a lot about that particular company, but I do know that, for example, there's a pair of sunglasses on Kickstarter that just got millions overnight. Which is basically a pair of sunglasses that you can put on that blacks out any screens wherever you are in the environment. So you won't be able to see your screen, but you also won't be able to see, in a pub for example, the TVs. It just turns everything black and it reduces all digital to nothing. People love it.

Tim: That's a really good idea.

Bronwyn: Yeah, absolutely. I think it's... the tide is turning, there's a consumer tipping point, and if organisations don't recognise that people need some space, need some silence, and they just keep bombarding them, then they will lose customers. Our recommendation on this is to actually recognise that if a customer goes silent on you, it does not... it's not an opportunity to bombard them with more, but actually to think about your tone of voice, how often you're speaking to them and reaching out to them, the channels that you're using. Don't just keep bombarding them with feedback forms and everything else. It requires a much more considered approach to really understand who that customer is and how they like to be communicated to and ensure that you're delivering value. Otherwise they'll shut you out.

Tim: And on the silence is gold trend, in terms of the actions, one of them is measure cognitive effort?

Bronwyn: Yes.

Tim: Can you tell me what you mean by that?

Bronwyn: Sure. This sort of goes back to Daniel Kahneman's book on thinking fast and slow. You have system one and system two thinking. System one thinking is the stuff that we do very easily, instantaneously, like $2 + 2$. It doesn't take any cognitive load; stuff that's quite intuitive. System two thinking is the thinking that takes much more cognitive load, that is like 333×562 . For you to work that out, it takes a long time and you just sort of sit there.

Tim: Yeah, so, I'm distracted now.

Bronwyn: Exactly! And it does, so that's exactly it. It takes over your brain, it sort of hijacks your brain. You need to uni-task; you need to sit and think about that. A lot of the bigger challenges that we have in life fall into that system two, but it's hard. It takes energy, and so we tend to avoid it. And then that's where all sorts of biases kick in and all sorts of shortcuts that we tend to do. So, what we're talking about there is to consider what it is that we're asking of our customers, and whether it's... how much cognitive load, and to design the experience around that. And also to have conscientious understanding of the other things in people's lives, the context of people's lives, and the other services that are competing for them, for the same type of thing. Again, it's really that user-centred approach to understanding what you're asking of customers, and then designing the communication or the interaction with that attention to detail, and that empathy for what it is that they're trying to do.

Tim: It sounds as though that is, to a certain extent, looking at, how simple is it to conduct business with me? And maybe down at the simple "I'm on an app," as the transactional level...

Bronwyn: Yeah.

Tim: Is that so easy that my brain isn't thinking hard, what am I trying to do here? Is it at that level, or are you at a different level?

Bronwyn: Well, there's another element to it, which is my emotional engagement with it. If it's something like insurance and booking my holiday insurance, and I know that I'm going to go skiing and I want some insurance, but I don't necessarily want to, personally, engage with that a lot. I don't want to have to get into system two thinking with that. I don't have enough investment; I just want a really good solution, very quick, that is at the right price point for me. And so, when we are thinking about how to design a service that enables people to do that, then we need to understand those constraints and make it really quick and simple and fast, and deliver it in a way that's very easy to do.

Bronwyn: Whereas if I'm making investment decisions about my financial wealth in the future, that is system two. I do need to take the time out to think about that, and in that, I do want a high interaction. I'd probably want to speak to somebody who's an expert. I want to take the time and have all of the information because it has a big impact down the line for me. So it's thinking about those kind of things and then designing the right experience and the right level of interaction. But if you've got something that's low value to customers and you're expecting them to do this big extensive process of research or clicks or engagement, they're not going to do it because it's-

Tim: And that absolutely is an issue at this point.

Bronwyn: Yeah.

Tim: I, over the last week, have been pulling together a whole lot of my financial information just to understand where things are at, and some of that was so hard just to get into a system, just to log into a system that I've not been into for a while. It had forgotten who I was, I'd forgotten my password, we couldn't... the two problems didn't seem to be ones that we could just reconnect very easily.

Bronwyn: I've had exactly the same experience. I've had an experience where I've made an investment for my son in the UK and I've been locked out of the digital experience and I've e-mailed them, and the list of things that I have to do in order to... it's just too hard. I still, after years, haven't managed to actually

find out what's happening with that investment. It's just become too hard. We need to design with the understanding that this happens to people and find ways of reducing the impact of failure so that you can help people through these things. There are ways to use technology that enable you to identify people much more quickly these days rather than the overloaded process that some organisations take customers through.

Tim: This is touching on the... if we're getting the right message to the right customer at the right time, we're then getting into that level of personalisation, and then the use of the data around personalisation and what's okay and what's not okay. How are you seeing that unfold at the minute?

Bronwyn: We are seeing, again, a consumer shift in attitudes around their own personal data and how much they're willing to give to businesses, and their expectations of what those organisations will do with that data. I think a couple of things have happened in the last year. First of all was Cambridge Analytica. It was obviously a big thing in the press, but I think what it enabled for consumers was the recognition that all of their clicks and likes and shares and opinions and everything else, that data could actually be used in ways in which they had never intended it to be used. That sort of woke people up. That's one.

And then we've also had GDPR come in. That's been huge. Not only because, again, a lot of stories in the media and new processes and expectations of organisations in terms of how they collect, secure, share, and store data. But also for customers. We see it slightly less in Australia, but certainly in Europe. You see it every time you go to a new website. You get a little popup, which is data protection popup, or a cookie popup.

Tim: I get that...

Bronwyn: Every time.

Tim: ... pretty well every time now, yeah.

Bronwyn: Absolutely. So every time that happens, there's this little subliminal message in the customer's mind that, "Oh, I'm about to hand

over data." There's now the description of what that data is being used for. If people are reading that, for you to just say, "I'm going to take your data because I'm going to use it for marketing, I'm going to use it to sell more stuff to you." That's kind of, for a lot of people, maybe not a good enough reason to take my data. And then you've had all of the data breaches and the scares and the hacks, so people are more worried about the security of their data.

I think all of these things are just making customers think twice about what data they share, and they've also started to recognise that their data is worth something. Interestingly, it's probably a slightly over-inflated sense of what the data is worth. I think there was some research done which said that even if you have all of your data records plus your medical records and hand them over, it's probably only worth about 10 pounds a year.

Bronwyn: Your data, as a sole customer, is actually not worth a huge amount. But in aggregate, it's worth tonnes to organisations.

Tim: Absolutely.

Bronwyn: So people have this slightly inflated sense of what their data is worth, but they do know it's worth something, and therefore they're holding organisations to account a little more.

Tim: When you say "an aggregated data", I just want to maybe challenge. We've spoken about the importance of individualisation of data. So if we're aggregating data, are we not perpetuating the existing problem of treating people as a group and hitting them with massive information rather than the right person at the right time?

Bronwyn: You're still very much wanting to deliver a personalised experience that has value for that customer, that's based on their customer profile. But the aggregate population data can give us very valuable information about broad trends, and people who like this, like that; those kind of things. For example, we have designed a prototype for a service that

helps people with diabetes, that helps to provide much more personalised recommendations around insulin intake. Your personal data goes into that in terms of your activity for the day, how much you've eaten, how much you've slept, and everything else like that. But it also uses this sort of aggregate population data to help validate and make more accurate predictions around the insulin intake, so it uses both aggregate and personalised data.

Tim: And we've not even touched on artificial intelligence yet.

Bronwyn: Yes.

Tim: The whole... Opportunities and challenges that that would present from a, "Is my data complete?"-

Bronwyn: -"Is it free of bias?"

Tim: Absolutely. Especially for the banking industry. Yes, the banks have had challenges with trust over the last year, but people still see the data which was in... that the bank holds about me is a secure source of trusted data, and I trust the banks to be careful with my data. Not all industries exist in that world, so it is a particular challenge for the banks as services around personalisation take off. How can a bank compete with Facebook in that realm? I think that is a bit of a challenge for them, because they do have to approach it from the view that the customer's data is the most important thing, and looking after that customer is the most important thing, rather than, "My business is selling people's data." Very different world.

Bronwyn: It is a very different world, but I think it's a good side to be on, to be being cautious and being careful, because I think we're seeing that trusted brands, they are outperforming, on the stock market, those that aren't. There're some stats that they're out-performing it by an estimated 214%, but also we're sort of... what was the stat that you had there?

Tim: I was going to say, the quote is from an IBM survey: "75% of people surveyed said they wouldn't buy a product¹ from a company they don't trust." 75% is pretty significant.

¹ Fjord Trends 2019 https://trends.fjordnet.com/Trends_2019_download.pdf - see page 34

Bronwyn: Absolutely, that's huge. It just goes to show that consumers and their behaviour and their attitudes can really influence business decisions and how organisations operate because they have the power of the wallet. So, I think it's right for banks to be cautious and to ensure that the data is obviously naturally very secure. What is interesting about AI in particular is that, I think once it kind of becomes commonplace and people start to be using it, people no longer consider it AI. They just kind of... it's just an app that does things; it's my recommendations on Netflix, or it's my Google Wayfinding.

Tim: Absolutely.

Bronwyn: It's no longer AI. AI is only sort of almost used in the consumer's mind about new technology that doesn't yet exist.

Tim: A couple of years ago when, I think, AI started to blossom as a consumable service, I think we all looked at it as it's a different thing from what we already have. But then we very quickly realised it's effectively, from a technology lens, it's like code. It's everywhere.

Bronwyn: It's absolutely everywhere.

Tim: And we don't talk about the emergence of code. No, it's ingrained in everything that we do. I think artificial intelligence with, you know, data is now engraved in everything we do, and now the analytical lens that I put on top of it and the automation that comes out the back, is just going to be ingrained in everything we do. It's not just a thing on its own.

Bronwyn: But I think what is interesting is that it does start to change our workplaces and the work experience. I think there's some really interesting considerations for that where, in some ways, AI becomes almost like another colleague.

Tim: With the same biases that your colleagues have.

Bronwyn: Yes, absolutely, yeah. We found that one of the ways that you can really design a better work experience in these interactions

between AI and workers, is actually think of workers as a teammate and think about, what are the qualities that you would expect a teammate to have? And then, how can we build those into our cognitive systems? Because those things don't actually come for free. So, things like observability and being able to see what the AI is doing; directability, being able to tell it what to do or to change its course; feedback, so if you're telling it to change its course multiple times, is it learning and starting to take that feedback on and starting to change its direction on an ongoing way? These kinds of things, you actually have to design them in from the outset and it's a really interesting field that's emerging.

Tim: It's really interesting from the perspective of another colleague because we're seeing the emergence of: A, a proactive virtual agent that can sit with an advisor and potentially say, "I'm not sure that advice you're giving is right. You need to... here's how you change." **Tim:** But if it's another colleague, would you be happy with a colleague sitting on your shoulder all day saying, "I'm not sure that's right. You might want to rethink that decision." Does that then challenge your role in the organisation?

Bronwyn: Yeah. So, it is - and this is exactly why we have to think about how we design these interactions between humans and machines, to take into account the human reaction to that, that emotional reaction. I think we've seen quite a lot of examples of this in adjacent industries or different industries.

For example, in cancer pathology, there's some research done by Harvard where an AI could predict cancer with the accuracy of about 92%, a human could predict it with about 96%, but when you augment the human's capability with the AI, it's around 99.5%². We're seeing the same thing in other medical environments. But what we've found is that, in one example I heard, the humans are given the opportunity to make the decisions, and if the AI agrees with the decisions, then it won't say anything. But if the AI disagrees, rather than telling that they're wrong, it poses three extra questions.

² Christopher Wanjek, Live Science, "AI boosts cancer screens to nearly 100 percent accuracy," June 21, 2016:

<https://www.livescience.com/55145-ai-boosts-cancer-screen-accuracy.html>



Bronwyn: Those three questions just give pause to the doctors and the decisions that they're making and makes them reevaluate and look at different aspects of it. So, the AI won't make the final decision, it won't tell the doctor what to do or what not to do, but it will flag when it has a different result or opinion, and just ask these three extra questions.

Tim: Have you thought about X?

Bronwyn: Yes.

Tim: Very good. I think that can apply just as well in financial services, advisory perspectives.

Bronwyn: Yes.

Tim: Absolutely.

Bronwyn: And then the other really interesting thing in terms of financial services and call centres is when you have virtual agents, chat bots, and those kind of things helping to deal with consumer request and interactions, I think there's a really interesting, again, relationship between these cognitive systems and the call centre agents in terms of how they train each other.

Bronwyn: I think you're thinking the very top tier call centre agents and using those people to train AI in the first place, but then the AI sort of helps to train the new recruits in terms of... so, this kind of opportunity, I think, for again, designing these rich learning systems between these cognitive systems and the human, and taking the best of both and actually raising the level of both the humans and the machines by them working together.

Tim: Yeah, absolutely. Okay, we are tragically overtime, but I've been having so much fun that I didn't want to stop. I know that we've still several trends we've not touched on. If anybody wants to find out more about the Fjord trends and you, what should they do?

Bronwyn: Very happy to have a chat and continue the discussion online. Please reach out to me on LinkedIn, but there's also the Fjord Trends report, that's F-J-O-R-D Trends. If you just search that, you can get the full report. There's, as you say, two or three other trends

that we've touched on which I think are really fascinating as well.

Tim: Bronwyn, thanks loads for your time, really appreciated it.

Bronwyn: Pleasure.

Tim: Look forward to speaking again soon.

Bronwyn: Thanks, Tim.

Tim: Bye bye. If you have any questions about today's podcast, we'd love to hear from you. Please just reach out to me on LinkedIn, that's Tim Broome, and we'd love to continue the conversation. See you next time.

Presenter: You've been listening to Embracing Technology in Financial Services. You can hear the entire series on the Accenture Vision App and SoundCloud by visiting accenture.com/embracingtech. For more information on all our podcasts, please visit accenture.com.

[End of recording.]

Copyright © 2019 Accenture
All rights reserved.

Accenture, its logo, and High Performance Delivered are trademarks of Accenture.