The 21st century starts now

The past year has been an absolute game changer. From a global pandemic to a political realignment, 2020 has seen more change in the span of 12 months than we had seen over the previous decade. This month, Accenture Interactive released the findings of its new Fjord Trends report, which explores 10 key trends that will influence the future of business, technology and design over the coming year.

In the face of the unprecedented, people have harnessed their ingenuity to challenge the status quo. Some felt driven to create more sustainable and equitable societies. Others turned inward, looking for ways to learn and grow. As the year 2021 begins, people and organizations are poised to pick up where they left off.

Each year, Accenture Interactive crowdsources trends in business, technology and design for the coming year. And each year, we find ourselves looking outside the industry to detect the shifts that will impact our work. This year, more than ever, the business landscape has been shaped by global events. We focused on how the world has changed and how we want to live in it. We're all exploring, which is creating a safe space for experimentation, prototyping and learning.

In our 2021 trends, we focused on how the world already felt like it was at a tipping point. The events of 2020 have only accelerated the realignment we envisaged. It shed more light on the fact we still live with systems that are sometimes broken and often unequal—and consequently unfit for the challenges of the 21st century.

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There has never been a more dramatic global backdrop for Fjord Trends in any of our 14 years. When we set out to research what the world of business, technology and design might look like in 2021, we found ourselves wrestling with an existential question: How will organizations change in the wake of the global crisis? How will we navigate the collision of hypergrowth and hyperdisruption? What’s the role of the business in shaping our collective future?

In 2020, the world collectively came to know displacement. The rituals that form the framework and content of our everyday existence—a cup of coffee in the morning, a ride to school, a commute into the office—were all disrupted. Some organizations tried to respond: how should they manage the physical assets and refocus on points of delight versus points of pain? As people adjusted, organizations had to find new ways to interact with their stakeholders. How do brands continue to reach and communicate with people, and even with their neighbors, when the entire physical and digital landscape has changed?

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