

# A-LIST

## 2021

*Meet some of the movers and shakers who make up the channel elite*

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# Welcome to the A-List 2021



**DOUG WOODBURN**

Group editor, channel  
CRN

If a 22nd-century human stumbled upon a time capsule containing a copy of this supplement, they would discover in its pages a neat summary of what life was really like in this most exceptional of years.

When creating the questions for our annual who's who of the channel back in September, we opted to make it a lockdown special (a decision that appears more prescient than it actually was now that a second national 'shutdown' is in full swing).

More than any other, this year's edition is a snapshot of a moment in time, namely October 2020, when most of the responses were filled in.

Our futuristic homo sapiens would have in their hands an historical document that reveals the good, the bad and the ugly of a year that saw much of the world's population self-isolate for months on end.

They would surely marvel at the array of early 21st-century apps that helped this cohort of tech leaders through the crisis, from Netflix, Deliveroo and Strava to Wildix, Meditopia and Zwift.

They will have learned in their history classes that early 21st-century man liked to dress in 'business suits' and jet off to attend a never-ending carousel of conferences. Imagine their bemusement,



Beyond the random (but interesting) facts, the A-List would make a fascinating historical artefact on the evolution of the technology landscape

then, as they discover that a sizeable minority of our A-Listers view the ongoing moratorium on face-to-face gatherings with ambivalence, or even a degree of relief.

And they would be intrigued that many A-Listers used this quieter period to get fighting fit, shedding the pounds by lacing up their running shoes, doing burpees with a long-haired, estuary-accented online entrepreneur, or racing against each other in Peloton.

Without downplaying the devastating impact wrought by the pandemic, lockdown has – paradoxically – clearly had both positive and negative effects on the home and working lives of many of the 132 top channel executives we grilled.

Now in its 17th year, the *CRN A-List* is designed to tease out some fun information on the channel's top executives.

Did you know, for example, that in 2020 Westcoast supremo Joe Hemani got his golf handicap down to 17?

Printerland's James Kight watched every episode of *Coronation Street* ever made, meanwhile, while Block boss Marc Chang became obsessed with making his lawn look perfect.

Beyond these random (but interesting) facts, the *A-List* would make a fascinating historical artefact on the evolution of the technology landscape. Our final question in particular – looking at the post-COVID landscape – generates some intriguing predictions on how the industry will pan out over the coming years.

Thanks again to all the industry leaders who took the time to provide their thoughtful responses, from Softcat CEO Graeme Watt and Insight SVP Emma de Sousa, to Jacqueline de Rojas CBE.

Poring through all this information in an era long after Brexit and Trump, our futuristic hominid may well reflect that – despite the catastrophic health, social and economic impacts of COVID – her ancestors learned much about themselves and what really made them tick during this strange period.

# Stronger together



**SHAUN LYNN**

Chief executive  
Agilitas

Agilitas is proud to be supporting the *CRN A-List* for the third consecutive year. This esteemed list celebrates key players in the UK IT channel by recognising their contribution towards the growth and success of this fascinating industry. It is truly an honour for me to be listed alongside these industry leaders this year.

While being recognised by your peers is definitely a highlight, it is nowhere near as rewarding as being given the opportunity to support such an important project, especially in the current climate when leaders are under increased pressure to provide confidence, direction and inspiration to an industry that has not been immune to disruption.

2020 has been a year that will have a profound transformational effect on us all. The pandemic has impacted countless industries, and this does not exclude the channel. Businesses have experienced disruption like never before, but now is the time to learn from these challenges so that we are ready to bounce back stronger.

Earlier this year, we launched 'CONNECT to Collaborate', the second in a series of 'Voice of the Channel' campaigns spearheaded by Agilitas. The report explores how taking a collaborative approach to partnerships can help businesses to persevere through this



Here at Agilitas, we have learned that transformation and collaboration have a fundamental role to play in driving business forward. We have embraced these key principles during a period that has seen Agilitas successfully on-board a record number of new customers at a time when we are all experiencing significant disruption

challenging time. The report also reveals that decision-makers have come to accept and understand that innovation has a key role to play to ensure business survival.

Here at Agilitas, we have learned that transformation and collaboration have a fundamental role to play in driving business forward. We have embraced these key principles during a period that has seen Agilitas successfully on-board a record number of new customers at a time when we are all experiencing significant disruption.

It hasn't been easy and continues to be a challenging journey, but with a talented team, agility and innovation behind you anything can be achieved. The ability to adapt to change and invest in our partnerships will be key in ensuring that we deliver the best service possible for our customers.

In this current environment, it is essential that we collaborate and learn from each other's experiences and challenges. This way, we can find new ways to build a stronger, more resilient global channel. The *CRN A-List* is the perfect platform for this as it brings leaders and decision-makers together and enables us to reflect on trends and, to the best of our abilities, predict what's yet to come.

Agilitas and I are thrilled to celebrate with all those channel leaders who made it onto this year's *CRN A-List*. It is extremely well deserved and truly reflects the talent and influence in our industry. Let 2020 be a year of reflection from which we learned how to become better-quality businesses through collaboration with our peers as we prepare ourselves for the next exciting chapter. After all, we are stronger together.





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# A

- **Andrew Allen**
- **Jane Ashworth**
- **Jon Atherton**
- **Rye Austin**



**ANDREW ALLEN**

*Chief executive  
Aabyss Limited*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

At the risk of sounding like a cliché, it would be my team. Although we are a tech company, we are a people business. Witnessing how the team have supported our clients, each other and me has been a source of great inspiration.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Tom Hanks, Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Warren Buffett.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I have used fitness as a positive



I feel like I am suffering with fatigue of online events; staring at the screen all day is not the best way to learn. The other disadvantage is the lack of peer networking

distraction, so it would have to be the several new pairs of trainers for different types of running. Even writing this makes me cringe – I think I need to get out more!

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Satya Nadella and Microsoft had the scale and resources to make a significant impact and I believe they have done so. They dedicated significant resources and offered help to organisations, charities and individuals around the world, without profiting from it. It shows a socially responsible attitude to business; a great partner for us.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Microsoft Teams has allowed us to have face-to-face meetings internally and externally and with so many adopting this method of communication almost overnight, it has become the norm. Although it will never replace in-person meetings – the opportunity to see what isn't said – it has helped significantly in

coping with the pandemic.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I'd have to pick an astronaut, in order to undergo the adrenaline rush of take-off and landing, the experience of zero gravity and to view the world in a way that few have. What a week!

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I do, for a couple of reasons. I feel like I am suffering with fatigue of online events; staring at the screen all day is not the best way to learn. The other disadvantage is the peer networking – I find this to be one of the greatest benefits of in-person events.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I'm confident that we'll find a way back to our normal way of life at some point, but the revolution of flexible working and videoconferencing on a global scale is here to stay. There are many benefits that have been thrust upon us, and our job is to create structure and balance.



**JANE ASHWORTH**

*Channel director  
Lenovo*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

It has been a challenging year, but a big inspirational highlight for me came from my 16-year-old daughter, Elise. Despite all the hurdles COVID-19 threw at schoolchildren in 2020, I was super proud that she smashed her GCSEs with 12 A\* grades. She's now my go-to person when I'm having challenges with my budget.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

My ideal Zoom party would be a virtual cookery class with Gino D'Acampo, Claudia Winkleman and Katherine

Ryan. The three of them are so witty and hilarious – but I can't imagine the food would come out that good given we'd all be crying with laughter.

#### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Pre-lockdown, my weeknights were filled with events and customer dinners. I've loved having a hard stop in the evening and being able to connect with my family over dinner every night. Talking to friends and colleagues, family time has been among the best benefits of lockdown.

#### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Satya Nadella has been a great figurehead this year. Without his stewardship of Microsoft and the move towards collaboration tools and software, working during the pandemic would have been a very different story. Thanks to these tools, workers around the world shifted seamlessly to virtual meetings almost overnight, bringing staff and businesses together during one of the toughest periods I've ever experienced in my career.

#### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Netflix has been my go-to app to keep me and the family entertained during



This new work model has the potential to create places where women can feel secure and thrive

the pandemic. My husband is a property developer, and he's exasperated with me and my desire to redevelop homes to achieve my *Selling Sunset* dreams after seeing all those amazing LA mansions.

#### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I've always been a fan of Sir David Attenborough and I'd love the freedom to travel the world and visit remote places to experience the intimate moments with animals he's had over the years. My favourite Attenborough moment will always be his encounter with the Rwandan gorillas, I'd love to do that!

#### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

While I miss seeing our partners and the banter and team camaraderie that come with face-to-face events, I certainly don't miss the preparation, stress or nerves that running major events entails.

#### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I think the work model has been fundamentally broken and that the hybrid home/office model will be the legacy of COVID-19. But more importantly, this new work model has the potential to rebalance the channel workforce, neutralising the overtly masculine sales floor and creating places where women can feel secure and thrive.



**JON ATHERTON**

*Group commercial director  
CI Distribution*

#### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

It would have to be witnessing West Bromwich Albion back in their rightful status as a Premier League club. Sport has a way of uniting people, and in what has been a challenging year for all, I can attest that the joy of witnessing my childhood football club gain promotion once again, after two seasons in the Championship, definitely brightened my mood – not to mention giving me some long-awaited bragging rights among my peers.

#### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Cyrille Regis, Rory McIlroy, and Lenny Henry. There are strong Albion ties present with Regis, a baggies legend; and Henry, a legend in his own right and a fellow baggie supporter who's always good for a laugh, so that should make for lively conversation. I'd be surprised if McIlroy shared our Albion passion, but as golf is my favourite pastime, there are several things I'd love to pick his brains about, specifically around why my bunker shots are so dire!

#### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I've been heavy on the snacks. It's much harder to turn them down when you're at home all day! But I do make myself earn them with daily walks and bike rides, which became a sort of lockdown tradition, at least when the weather was a bit warmer. Of course, occasional rounds of golf didn't go amiss either. I'm fortunate my CEO Jeremy Nash shares the same passion.

#### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

It's close, but I'd have to say Elon Musk. He's a controversial figure to some but the lengths he goes to in pushing the technological boundaries of what we think is possible, both on earth and above, is incredibly inspiring. After all, I'm in this field to make an impact, and who best represents that than the Tesla and SpaceX talisman?

#### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**





I've been heavy on the snacks. It's much harder to turn them down when you're at home all day! But I do make myself earn them with daily walks and bike rides, which became a sort of lockdown tradition, at least when the weather was a bit warmer

My trusty companion LinkedIn. There's no better way to keep in contact with other tech market masterminds. Through my now lengthy career in this field, I have built many relationships with numerous peers, and it's always enjoyable to catch up or witness their career milestones, show support to others who may be going through a difficult period, or have support shown to me on one of my blogs.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Slaven Bilic, without a doubt. My Albion fandom is bursting through here but what lifelong fan wouldn't relish the chance to manage their team in the top flight?

Even if only for a week, it would allow me to see if I do indeed know better than the manager as I claim during my fits of fan rage. My FM20 team has won the treble three years running... does that count?

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes, one hundred per cent. They remain discontinued for the foreseeable future and, I must stress, rightly so, as health and safety should always take precedence. However, meeting my peers or building new partnerships at said events are unquestionably worthwhile, and I imagine everyone in the channel shares my sentiment and looks forward to the day we can safely host these events once more.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

As with every industry, I expect more businesses to adopt a remote working or hybrid outlook moving forward, having seen the discussions on LinkedIn and other media platforms. Supply and demand is a truthful cliché, so an increase in remote working solutions is more than likely as well as an increase in webinars and virtual events as the world becomes hygiene-conscious post-COVID-19.



**RYE AUSTIN**

*Chief commercial officer  
Core*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Without question, having less of my life consumed by travelling and public transport and more free time devoted to my family.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

My 'Microsoft Teams' party would be: Stephen Fry for his wealth of world knowledge and intellect. Eddie Murphy for being one of the funniest men alive, and Joe Rogan for being a host able to span a huge range of topics and hopefully landing on a topic that I could add something to.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Online poker. Keeping in contact with friends hasn't been easy and online poker gives us a nice backdrop for a social gathering and a bit of fun. The competitive nature of the game, and my desire to win has nothing to do with it!

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Elon Musk. I don't agree with many of his opinions but it's incredible and refreshing to see how he thinks about and disrupts markets. He has considerable resources at his disposal now, and many would take this huge success as enough – yet still he's unafraid to try radical new things and keep pushing boundaries.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**



I've rediscovered YouTube. I don't watch much television, but I do find myself watching a lot of 'how to' videos of anything from new technology to general hobbies I've yet to start

I've rediscovered YouTube. I don't watch much television, but I do find myself watching a lot of 10- to 15-minute 'how to' videos of anything from new technology and market news, to new ways of working and general hobbies I've yet to actually start.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

It's hard to not turn political and select a world leader, but to be selfish I would go with Lewis Hamilton. With the right week selected, I'd have the chance to drive the fastest F1 car ever to have existed: the 2020 Mercedes F1 car.

I'd get to experience over 5G forces and compete with the elite of world drivers. Not to mention having a strong likelihood of starting a race from pole position, leading and winning an F1 race. That would be quite a week, but 2020 could also be the year to win a world record-equalling seventh world championship.

I doubt I could change the world in a week as a word leader, but I could get the chance to be top of the world for a week.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I do miss face-to-face events. I hadn't fully appreciated how important they are until they were taken away. More than this however, I miss the face-to-face interactions with the team and with our customers. It feels at times in this virtual world like a sense has been removed from which to influence decisions and gauge reactions.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Pre-COVID many had a remote-enabled business, but I think it's fair to say the majority positioned remote working as secondary to the primary face-to-face.

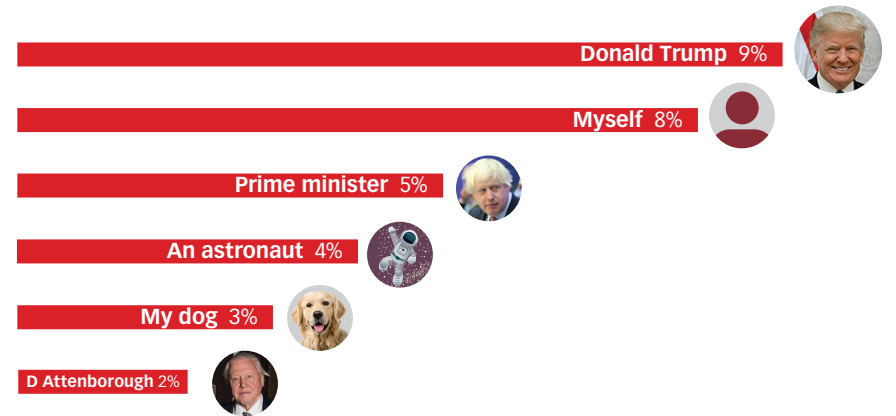
The way people build relationships and develop trust in the channel likely needs to evolve at a fast rate to be effective in a remote-first world.

For example, anyone who hadn't made the move before to an inbound-style marketing approach pre-COVID will need to find new ways to offer a complete experience to prospects. COVID will force organisations to develop digital engagement at a hugely accelerated rate if they want to remain relevant.

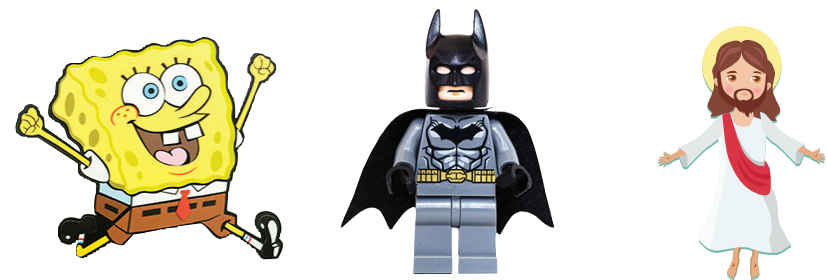
**I wanna be like you...**

If they could be someone else for a week, **9 per cent** of A-Listers said they'd be **Donald Trump**, and most said they would resign/pull out of the presidential race. A happy-with-themselves **8 per cent** would stay as they are. A further 5 per cent said they would be the **prime minister**, while 4 per cent would like to be **astronauts** on the International Space Station looking down at Earth, 3 per cent said they'd spend the time as their **dogs** and 2 per cent would be **Sir David Attenborough**.

**If you could be someone else for a week, who would you be?**



One A-Lister would be **Spongebob** and live in a pineapple, one would be **Batman**, and another said they'd like to be **God**.



# B

- **Mike Bacon**
- **Rob Bardwell**
- **Andy Barrow**
- **John Baskerville**
- **Alastair Bell**
- **Annabel Berry**
- **Joel Berwitz**
- **Alanzo Blackstock**
- **Pam Blanchard**
- **Richard Blanford**
- **Ben Boswell**
- **Darren Brodrick**
- **Paul Bryan**
- **Chris Bunch**
- **Richard Burke**
- **Antony Byford**



## MIKE BACON

Chief executive  
Academia Ltd



I would have to reserve the final place at my Zoom party for Bobby Moore – possibly the greatest British footballer ever and certainly the only one to lift the World Cup. Hopefully heaven has access to Zoom!

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

I am extremely proud of how The Academia Group has responded to the pandemic, including my wonderful team of 120-plus staff. But I would have to reserve my greatest source of pride for the recent purchase of The Academia Group by Andrew Harman. Not only is this my biggest highlight of 2020, but the most significant day in the 17-year history of Academia.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

I'd start with Gordon Ramsay to ensure my party guests are well fed (with home-delivered food parcels of course). Entertainment would be provided by Alan Partridge for comedy value, with the final place reserved for Bobby Moore – possibly the greatest British footballer ever and certainly the only one to lift the World Cup. Hopefully heaven has access to Zoom!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

My sugar intake has increased by 1,000 per cent, including having elevenses three times a day!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk is a divisive figure, but he's using his wealth to improve the planet and mankind – which this year included his successful SpaceX expedition.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Without doubt it's got to be Microsoft Teams, which has enabled our staff to remain productive and in touch with each other throughout lockdown.

And we love the added bonus of being able to select different backgrounds on calls, which has allowed us to hold meetings in some very interesting locations.



### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

As a passionate Hammer, it would have to be either David Gold or David Sullivan (owners of West Ham United FC). I would turn my beloved Hammers into a European force on the pitch, rebuild Upton Park and change the shirt sponsors to Academia!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Of course, who doesn't? There's nothing like face-to-face interaction, but I've enjoyed the challenge of ensuring communication remains consistent.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Our messaging in 2020 has promoted a mobile/remote workforce, and it's advice that we've implemented ourselves. If Academia is typical of the channel, I expect that we will never go back to being in the office five days a week again.





## **ROB BARDWELL**

*Group executive chairman  
Boston Pinacl Group*

### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

The way our company reacted to the pandemic, continuing to offer first-class support to our customers while protecting all involved. Not an easy feat!

### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Valentino Rossi, Churchill (not the dog), Keith Richards.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Listening to Ken Bruce's PopMaster. I love how people who don't do well make excuses.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Elon Musk, pushing all the boundaries.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Videoconferencing.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Lewis Hamilton. I'd drive in two F1 Grand Prixes, fly in his jet and mix with the stars.

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes. I believe the best business is done face to face, building long-term relationships.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Better understand the inter-dependencies.



I've been listening to Ken Bruce's PopMaster. I love how people who don't do well make excuses



## **ANDY BARROW**

*Technical director  
ANS Group*

### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Renovating the forever home despite the significant challenges!

### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Sir David Attenborough, the band Future Islands, Al Pacino.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Learning how to cook really unhealthy and fattening food – plus booze.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

There are so many: Scott Galloway, who has great views on the future of the tech business and wise words on COVID; Steve Mullaney from Aviatrix is a top guy with tons of experience and great opinions; and Simon Wardley, who proves to be right on many things related to tech.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Deliveroo. I've spent far too much money on this app.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Doesn't everyone want to be the prime minister for just a week?

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

More than anything. I'm a field-based CTO who's used to the M6 and the train. I'd do anything to meet people and socialise. You can take this for granted until it's taken away.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The last few months have shown who can help customers when they need it and how certain technologies help businesses and move them forwards. Hopefully this will clean out some of the less relevant technologies and solutions and refocus everyone on what's important.

Constant Zooms and Teams are boring, so finding innovative ways to engage certainly in the short to medium term is becoming key.



## JOHN BASKERVILLE

Managing director of RM Results  
and RM Education  
RM plc

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

In a work context, it's been working with a group of people who have risen to the challenges Covid presented, both for us and for our customers across the education system. We've seen such an amazing response from people, often while juggling many challenges at home, as we all wrestled our way through the situation. Being more selfish though, it's been getting the time to get out running and recovering a decent level of fitness.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Lewis Hamilton (local-born legend in my part of rural England) as I would love a glimpse of how celebrity life mixes so effectively with the supreme athletic and engineering discipline of his sport.

Michelle Obama – in the hope of hearing more about life inside the White House, and perhaps even some unfettered views on the current situation in US politics.

Brian Cox – it just has to be interesting to talk to anyone who is a rock musician turned physicist. Especially one who uses their celebrity to inspire children and adults alike and make science come to life.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Spending much more time with my family. My children's life slowed right down as schools closed and all their sports and hobbies came crashing to a halt, and for my wife and I, our own work and travel patterns changed overnight. So why is this a 'guilty' pleasure? Because I know it would have been better for all if normality had carried on, but it has been amazing for all of us to be forced into a situation that let us reflect a little on what the simple joys in life really are.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk – unpredictable and outspoken as he often is, I can't help but be inspired by his relentless refusal to let others tell him what can't be done. The first time I saw the Falcon rocket go into orbit then execute a landing on a tiny floating platform at sea, I remembered

those who years earlier kept explaining why he would never make it work. He continues to dream the seemingly impossible, and strive to make it reality. That is inspirational.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

The webcam! It's not a piece of technology I liked before COVID, but something I rely on every day now. I've learned to appreciate video as a tool that provides a more human sense of connection than voice alone – especially for groups who cannot easily get together with any frequency (for example when operating internationally).

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

It's tempting to say one of my cats, who seem to spend 17 hours a day sleeping with tough choices about when to eat and which sunny spot to move to for their next nap. More seriously, I would love to be Bill Gates for a week, to get involved in some of the amazing work he and Melinda do through their foundation and see what kind of prioritisation decisions you have to make across the range of world-changing investments they are considering.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes. While I admire the amazing way everyone has adapted to working and collaborating remotely, it doesn't replace the energy and enthusiasm you draw from a large event, nor all the little things

we pick up from myriad real-world connections, coincidental meet-ups and chats over coffee.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think we are all learning that the unexpected can happen, that when we try we can often do things that we previously thought impossible and that there are different models for working with each other that don't require constant travel and other inefficiencies that sap the time from our lives.

I hope that as we leave COVID behind, we can glean some good from these experiences to carry forward, use technology to bring us together in ways we hadn't valued before, free up time for the personal connections we all need and lessen our impact on the environment in the process.



As unpredictable and outspoken as Elon Musk is, I can't help but be inspired by his refusal to let others tell him what can't be done



## ALASTAIR BELL

Founder  
Bell Integration

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

My first child, Rory, graduating in politics and conflict studies and securing a graduate role in business development. I'd also set myself a goal of losing 10kg working with some excellent martial arts PTs, and am almost there. The post-COVID options as explained to me were "Hunk, chunk or drunk" so let's see.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Joe Strummer, Leonardo da Vinci and Jodie Comer – for all the right reasons.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I have no guilt around anything

pleasurable! If I had a new avenue it would be a variety of box sets, some good, some not so good but certainly mostly entertaining.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Bill Gates for his philanthropic achievements with his foundation, achieving accurate spend on healthcare and education to be rolled out globally.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My iPhone and iPad for tech, and for an app I'd say Squalk, partly as I founded the app but mostly as it addresses limitations found on other telco and comms apps.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Elon Musk. It would be interesting to know what technology developments he has on his roadmap that will disrupt and potentially change the world.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes, I miss people and doing business face to face. Zoom and Teams are far more efficient but you learn a lot about someone over a long lunch.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

For new business sales a longer sales cycle, for established relationships an upturn as customers work better with established and complementary partners within the channel.



## ANNABEL BERRY

Chief executive  
Sapphire

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

That's a tough one this year for obvious reasons. It would be seeing my folks again after seven months – it was a very emotional day. My other highlight was my only trip abroad this year, to San Francisco for RSA, followed by a road trip



A personal highlight was my only trip abroad this year, to San Francisco for RSA, followed by a road trip with fellow CRN A-Lister Hayley Roberts

with fellow CRN A-Lister Hayley Roberts, driving a convertible down route 1 to LA – amazing scenery and lots of belly laughs.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Bruce Springsteen, Phoebe Waller-Bridge and Stephen Fry. Bruce could bring his guitar so we could have a virtual singsong, Phoebe would no doubt make us all laugh and Stephen could amuse us with his witticisms. It sounds like a right laugh!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

'Lockdown pleasure', isn't that an oxymoron? Not sure I've done anything I feel guilty of in lockdown really – honest M'lud!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

There isn't anyone who particularly comes to mind, if I'm honest. I think generally there have been some really inspiring examples of leadership this year and some spectacular instances of poor leadership. Either way, it's a continual opportunity to reflect, take stock and



improve where you can as a leader. I don't think that ever ends – it shouldn't do, anyway.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Spotify. I'm a complete music obsessive so I'd have been lost without its archives of old and new music to dip into. Music really does affect your mood, so it's been a real lifeline this year.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Jeff Bezos and I'd focus on philanthropy as much as possible.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Absolutely! Our annual conference, NISC, was due to take place in November and I will definitely miss that this year. I can't wait to be able to socialise with the lovely people in the infosec industry again.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The obvious answer is the change in the way of working that we've had to adapt to this year. I think that presents more opportunities than challenges, the main one being the chance to be more effective with our time and not do so much unnecessary travel.

The second one would be that it opens up the ability to recruit from anywhere. Anything that expands the talent pool available to us is a good thing in my book.



**JOEL BERWITZ**

*Chief revenue officer  
boxxe*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

It's definitely our rebrand to boxxe – both within our own organisation and externally. The impact has been extremely positive. Our mission to 'Make Technology Human' is so appropriate for today's world.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Elon Musk, because he's a bit nuts but we'd have a good chat about technology. Harry Redknapp, because I'm a Bournemouth (and general massive football) fan. Finally Boris – so I could explain to him what clarity means.



If you'd asked me a few months ago if I missed face-to-face events, I would have said no, but as time passes I think that answer might be changing. Maybe I'd like to go to fewer than I did pre-COVID, but there is value in the face-to-face and social aspects

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure**

If you asked my wife she would definitely say that one person couldn't watch as many football matches per week as I did, alongside eating as many chocolate digestive biscuits.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

There are some great COVID-related channel stories this year, but if I had to choose more generally then the Snowflake IPO (valuing the firm at around \$70bn for an organisation with a turnover of \$260m last year) is a pretty inspirational story from its leaders.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

This might be a very standard answer, but I've spent hours, days and weeks in front

of Microsoft Teams. I could do without it – but at the same time I'd be pretty unproductive.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

A pilot, because I'd love to take myself on holiday!

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

If you'd asked me that a few months ago I would have said no, but as time passes I think that answer might be changing. Maybe I'd like to go to fewer than I did pre-COVID, but there is value in the face-to-face and social aspects.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Digital. If the channel doesn't embrace its own digital transformation, it will fall behind to the ones that do.





## ALANZO BLACKSTOCK

Senior director, alliances and channel UK&I  
ServiceNow

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

It has certainly been a memorable year. My biggest personal highlight would have to be the fact that I joined ServiceNow on 1 May, right in the middle of lockdown.

Joining a company from home was a new experience for me, meeting and interacting with many of my new colleagues only through Zoom meetings and Slack. While not an ideal way to start a new job, ServiceNow created an onboarding experience that was extremely effective and thoroughly engaging.



My guiltiest lockdown pleasure? Aside from wine, rum and chocolate, hmm...not sure

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

I'd love to have Alicia Keys attend a Zoom party to serenade guests. Jim Carey can keep everyone entertained with his funny faces and impersonations. I would certainly invite Sir Richard Branson as the third guest, if only to request a well-overdue refund for a cancelled holiday earlier this year!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Aside from wine, rum and chocolate, hmm...not sure.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

It may be too obvious a choice coming from me, but Bill McDermott, the chief executive of ServiceNow, has really been inspirational this year.

At the start of the pandemic, he focused ServiceNow on providing free access to apps designed to help governments respond to the coronavirus faster and more efficiently. He also made a commitment to not lay off any employee during the year. This meant ServiceNow employees could focus on customers and not be worried about their jobs.



It was also great to see so many tech leaders making public statements after the unfortunate event of George Floyd's death earlier this year, taking a stance against racism and in many cases donating to charitable causes that are fighting this injustice. My hope is that tech leaders maintain focus on playing their part to remove these systemic injustices from our communities.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

I think my most-used piece of tech has most certainly been Zoom, used multiple times daily and has replaced the majority of my interactions with colleagues. I am also a Zwift convert. Zwift is an innovative app that enables you to link your bicycle to a laptop, allowing you to ride, train or race with other cyclists in a virtual environment. It's helped to keep me physically and mentally healthy during these months of local and national restrictions.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'm really not sure that I would want to be anyone else for a week. That's not to

say that I'm living the dream – far from it! It's more a recognition that there is so much more I can do to be better and to improve my week that would give me far more satisfaction than stepping into the shoes of someone I don't really know.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Zoom is great, but it does not replace the spontaneous social interactions that you get with events and in meetings. Events are great for relationship building, getting to know people way better than you could ever do with videoconferencing. I don't miss the travel though!

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think the shift in the way we now engage with customers, partners, and our own employees will remain, to some extent, over the longer term. I think the productivity benefits that many have seen as well as reduced costs will mean that businesses will likely choose different operating models for different circumstances or requirements. I expect that there will be fewer large global events, many of which may continue online. I do hope that this will be balanced with more frequent local events.



**PAM BLANCHARD**

Director  
ICA

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

I'm not sure 2020 has had many highlights but mine has been finally finding some time to spend on the business, not in it.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Piers Morgan, Boris Johnson and Donald Trump.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Watching Netflix.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

I have been inspired by Gino Wickman, author of *Traction* because he written a simple easy to follow Operating System for Entrepreneurs which has inspired change.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

I couldn't have lived without Teams and the Wildix app.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I would be Carrie Symonds and put Boris in the hotseat to answer questions about how he reaches his decisions.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes, very much.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I believe COVID will bring about positive change in the way the channel operates long term by introducing greater flexibility with suppliers and an acceleration in innovation. The world has changed the way it consumes technology and demands greater interoperability.



I couldn't have lived without Teams and the Wildix app



**RICHARD BLANFORD**

Chief executive  
Fordway

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

The best thing is that Fordway's business has continued to thrive throughout the COVID crisis. One of our company values is 'adapt and thrive'. Having survived the 2008-10 financial crisis, but taken a few body blows, we learned that we needed to rebuild our business on contractually recurring revenue from Fordway delivered services, which we have done in the last 10 years.

Due to this focus, and because we concentrate on working with unsexy businesses, government and the NHS, we have not had to furlough any staff or make any redundancies due to the pandemic; we've actually recruited and onboarded 12 new staff since March. Our revenues have stood up very well, turnover is 12 per cent down from where we were aiming at the start of the year, over our financial year (just ended) we've broken even and have used lockdown to deliver some key internal changes which will stand us in good stead when the recovery comes.

On a purely personal level, my youngest child has just gone to university so I'm now looking forward to some quality time with my wife and the ability to travel to interesting places during term time, when we're allowed.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

If it has to be Zoom I'd love to pick the brains of Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan and Alexander the Great to understand and learn from what drove them and how they inspired and led their respective

armies to conquer the known world at the time. If we could meet in person it would be Oliver Reed, Keith Moon and Elle Macpherson, on the basis that we'd have a fantastic craic and I'd get to leave with Elle as the other two would be too drunk to care.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

As an unashamed petrolhead, in the earlier days of lockdown when the roads were empty, I did take advantage of the peace and quiet to have some fun in my car and on one of my motorbikes.

As I was still going to our offices a few days a week and the weather was lovely, I normally took the long way home in the evenings. I'm claiming it's due to a dodgy fuel gauge on a new (to me) motorbike, but I did manage to run out of fuel one evening a few miles from home and had to be rescued by my grown-up children, who were home for lockdown, with an emergency gallon of petrol. My son takes great delight in reminding me of this at any opportunity.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

I wouldn't say inspired, but I've been impressed by the cultural change and business transformation Satya Nadella has been leading at Microsoft, particularly the breadth and capability of their cloud offerings and their embrace of non-Microsoft technologies such as Linux and Android. It's a breath of fresh air compared with the Gates and Ballmer days.

I've also been trying to learn from

Netflix's and Amazon's business practices. While Reed Hastings and Jeff Bezos don't come across as the planet's most likeable people, they are leading extremely successful businesses that are vanguards of digital transformation and have some useful business ideas and practices we can use to run better businesses ourselves.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

It's not really technology, unless you count carbon fibre and titanium, but riding around the back roads in the Surrey Hills close to home on my bicycle for a few hours on summer evenings and weekends has kept me reasonably fit and given me some excellent thinking time. Plus, I've had the chance to enjoy the beautiful English countryside at its best.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

For a few years after I left school I tried to make a living as a professional musician (well drummer, a.k.a. bloke who hangs round with musicians), playing for a couple of bands with limited success – one band was signed but we never broke through. I fell into IT as a complete accident when I needed a job because music wasn't paying the bills.

My dream was – and to some extent still is – to be John Bonham (Led Zeppelin's drummer) for a week on one of their legendary tours in the mid to late 70s. Play a massive gig every night to thousands of screaming fans, party



I'm claiming it's due to a dodgy fuel gauge on a new (to me) motorbike, but I did manage to run out of fuel one evening a few miles from home and had to be rescued by my grown-up children



until dawn with a few groupies, wreck a hotel and on to the next one. Modern bands seem a bit clean living by comparison.

I'm still gigging, in fact my band have even played a couple of open-air, socially distanced gigs during the lockdown. The last audience we played to was about 50 people in the garden of a local pub, and most of them were older than I am.

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes. While you can maintain existing relationships and even make new ones over videoconferencing, meeting in person – ideally over a beer or meal – is still the best way to really get to know someone and develop meaningful business relationships.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I think the short-term impact of COVID on the channel will be limited, apart from the business impact on product-only resellers that don't generate service revenue who I'm sure are struggling. In the longer term I believe customers will take a more detailed look at the underlying company stability and their values, and how they coped with the pandemic, as much as the solutions they are offering when awarding contracts.

I believe the coming post-COVID business downturn will reshape the channel, similar to what happened after the 2008-10 financial crisis, where unprofitable or heavily leveraged channel players who have to show rapid growth or have poor business ethics will struggle to survive. I'm very glad Fordway doesn't have any borrowings and is not in hock to a private equity funder demanding short-term, unrealistic returns for the money they have invested.





**BEN BOSWELL**

Chief executive  
D|OPS Digital

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Working with the team to launch D|OPS Digital. We have had to be courageous and work incredibly hard as a team. Together we have worked through the most challenging and turbulent market conditions to set the foundation for an incredible 2021. I have also loved working with my Princes Trust mentees and Jake Armstrong at Addey and Stanhope School as we try our best to navigate the many personal challenges and consequences from the pandemic.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**



Having been lucky enough to work in various technology sales and leadership roles, I love meeting customers, colleagues and partners in person. With exception of Las Vegas, I miss the global travel that goes with it

As a crazy Liverpool fan it would have to be Jürgen Klopp, Jordan Henderson and Mo Salah. What a year it has been, so to hear their stories and experience would be a treat indeed.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I released a new Soundcloud DJ Mix every week through the height of lockdown (BB-in-LDT). There was escapism in the music.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

I have been particularly impressed by Mitchell Hashimoto and Armon Dadgar, co-founders of HashiCorp. Their technology vision and product execution underpins the Cloud Native automation and security platforms being deployed by Fortune 100 companies right across the globe.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

My Apple Earpods, one of the best end-

user experiences out there.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I would like to be an explorer in the pre-COVID world! I miss travel, new places, people and the life moments that they bring.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I certainly do. Having been lucky enough to work in various technology sales and leadership roles, I love meeting customers, colleagues and partners in person. With the exception of Las Vegas, I miss the global travel that goes with it.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The channel has had to be able to pivot to operating 100 per cent remotely – sales calls, workshops, contract negotiation and signature. Remote delivery has helped our collective customer base to drive digital transformation fast or fail. It will change our industry forever, in only a good way.



**DARREN BRODRICK**

General manager  
SHI Corporation UK

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Seeing my daughter graduate and achieve a first-class degree in psychology was special and made my year, especially being the first on our side of the family to go down the uni route; she's way smarter than I am. I also took the wrong route climbing Snowden and ended up climbing across the Crib Goch ridge, check it out on YouTube – a nervy experience in some places but loved it.

At work, seeing the way our staff adapted to remote working was pleasing.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**



I'd invite Tyson Fury who would be a good craic. I read his book earlier in the year, and I've certainly changed my opinion of him. Rita Ora for a little bit of singing and Micky Flanagan to keep us all entertained.

#### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Not so much guiltiest, but I've been out cycling a lot during lockdown and signed up to my first triathlon. I really got into cycling last year after a sponsored event and have found it a good way to unwind after or even during a hectic day. It's also kept me fit and focused through lockdown.

#### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Not really one individual but with the year we've all had, you have to admire and respect all business owners and leaders who have stuck by their people during these unprecedented times and continued to invest in their businesses and people. For many it could have been an easy reason to let people go and cut costs.

#### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

That's an easy one, Microsoft Teams is a fantastic piece of software and wins hands down. Like many, I'm someone who had Teams as part of a 365 subscription but was stuck in Outlook. Where would we be if Teams didn't exist and didn't have the collaboration functionality? It really does give you that

modern workplace feeling. It's allowed us to stay connected with our teammates, customers and partners. Hats off to Microsoft. FaceTime virtual dinners with friends was also very funny early on in lockdown.

#### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

A member of the Ryder Cup team after winning at Le Golf National in 2018. It would have been a pretty special celebratory week. I was lucky enough to attend the Friday matches at the fantastic golf course. What an experience – made even better by sticking one on the Americans.

#### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

One hundred per cent. The sooner we get back to them the better, I say. The world will certainly be different after COVID but we are a social species and we need that human interaction. The effect for other businesses is also huge for the economy as well, everyone benefits from events. We've delivered our global sales conference and quarterly customer summits virtually, which have all gone down pretty well but you can't beat seeing people face to face, it would be a pretty sad world if we didn't get back to that.

#### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I think that depends on how long it takes for the economy to recover but it will certainly change the way we work, with flexible working becoming more

of a standard, rather than a benefit. I don't see the IT channel changing per se, OEMs will continue to invest in R&D and build great technology, distribution will continue to help partners bridge the value gaps, resellers will continue to build their unique IP and customers will continue to need our help to digitally transform their business. If the pace of recovery is slow, then unfortunately some just may not be able to survive.



I was lucky enough to attend the Friday matches of the Ryder Cup at the fantastic course at Le Golf National in 2018. What an experience – made even better by sticking one on the Americans



**PAUL BRYAN**

*UK&I managing director  
Exertis*

#### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Having dinner with the family every day throughout the lockdown. I have two teenage children and getting to know them better by sitting down to dinner every day, which I never normally do, has been illuminating on so many levels. Teenagers in today's world face so many more challenges and pressures that I didn't have to face at their ages, and it has been just brilliant to get closer to them.

#### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Honestly, I'm not sure I would.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I think there may have been a cheeky beer or two when we were all jumping on Houseparty at the start. Joe Wicks all the way now though...

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Martin Hellawell (Softcat non-executive director) gave a speech at our tech summit. He is such an inspiration when talking about people culture and how this, when done well, is at the centre of well-being, excellence and growth in a company. An inclusive, happy, respectful and engaged workforce is at the heart of my thinking and I thank him for sharing his experience with us.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Microsoft Teams. I'm sure it is the same for everyone now, we can no longer do without videoconferencing.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Trump. Resign.

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Videoconferencing has been a revelation working through COVID and ironically has made us all more connected and productive in so many ways. Having said this, nothing beats office interaction and the more human side to our work relationships. Knowing how someone's weekend was, how their family is doing

or just some plain and simple banter, should not be underestimated when thinking about the glue that holds a company's culture together. I think we have all missed this throughout lockdown. We now have a number of people back in the office and this softer side has returned and we are better off for it.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

There will be some sizeable shifts in certain product categories and verticals. When COVID leaves us, there will be a number of questions: Will people go back to the same habits of business travel? What will be the preference in the way meetings are conducted in-office/externally? Will the offices ever fill back up again or is flexible working here to stay? What happens to the commercial office space that may no longer be needed? How will this affect technology in the workplace versus the prosumer at home?

How much of the urgent tech spend needs to be revisited in order to make the solutions more robust across devices, security and software platforms? Will the economic downturn resize certain markets permanently, bigger or smaller? The answers to which we can all take good educated guesses at, but the conclusion will be that the effects, in my opinion, will be dramatic.

The channel has always adapted quickly to the markets and is indeed why it exists. Good luck everyone.



**CHRIS BUNCH**

*Chief operations officer  
Cloud Technology Solutions (CTS)*

### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

The travel I was able to squeeze in. We made it to Madeira for a holiday in early March, a breathtaking island to visit if you enjoy walking. We also went to Wales in September and learned the basics of abseiling (don't fall too fast).

### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Tom Morello of Rage Against The Machine, Mohamed Salah of Liverpool FC, and Kevin Bridges of Scottish comedy fame.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Clearly I live a life that is too puritanical for anything guilty, but with the sun out over the summer I loved working while in the garden, and the look on people's faces as they saw blue sky behind me on calls.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

I should perhaps say Eric Yuan for the incredible way that Zoom has scaled without issue in the face of insane growth, but I think I'll go for Charity Majors who leads an excellent team at honeycomb.io.

Very few people understand distributed systems and true observability beyond marketing hype, and she does great work to promote this.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Hardware: I bought some Jabra wireless earbuds that have made conference calls while walking a pleasant reality. Software: G-Suite for keeping me connected to our teams and allowing real-time collaboration that just works

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Right now, I'd be one of the airline pilots still flying internationally, with a view to seeing just a little bit of another country and enjoying travel again. Ideally an A380 somewhere longhaul.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

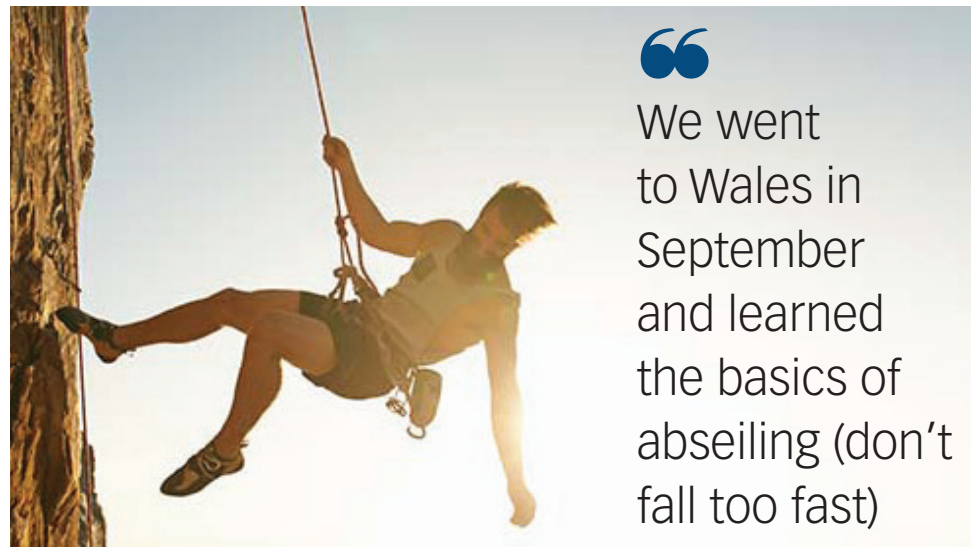
Yes. I don't think you can replace that human connection and buzz of excitement that you get from a well-run in-person event. Perhaps not all of them though...

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

There are plenty of positives around distributed working, definitely – and some travel and events will sensibly remain online I think, which can only be good for work-life balance and the planet. Projects that once had to be delivered on-site have in fact been delivered just fine from a distance.

I do however think a lot of activity will revert to prior patterns eventually, perhaps from early summer 2021. I think everyone has, or is, upgrading their online presence to ensure the user experience is as effective as it can be when everything is coming in via a digital channel.

I also believe we've seen a digital tipping point reached, where even the cloud laggards have seen that they need to move faster and embrace real technology change.



We went to Wales in September and learned the basics of abseiling (don't fall too fast)



**RICHARD BURKE**

*Chief executive  
Arrow Business Communications*



I miss face-to-face events a lot. I miss the energy and inspiration of being with people

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

The spirit and commitment of our teams to deal with what has been thrown at us this year.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Sir David Attenborough, Will Greenwood, Jürgen Klopp.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

TikTok.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Satya Nadella, transforming a sleeping giant into a revitalised tech giant changing the way we all work.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Microsoft Teams.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Jürgen Klopp.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes a lot. I miss the energy and inspiration of being with people.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Embed flexible working forever and bring resilience and understanding to our businesses that reminds us all we can deal with whatever comes our way and succeed.





## ANTONY BYFORD

Managing director  
Westcon

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Having the opportunity to spend more time with my two children and the option to teach them a little. Sebastian's reading has developed hugely in the past six months. And yes, as much as that has been super difficult while still supporting teams and my business, it has been a joy.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Captain Sir Tom Moore would be my first. A true inspiration and someone who will have some amazing stories of strength, determination and real sacrifice.

Second, Jose Mourinho. Being a Spurs fan, I'd give him a good talking to on team selection.

Kevin Bridges, a Scottish comedian who I've become a fan of over the last six months and genuinely makes me cry with laughter with his sketches.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I invested in a Peloton late last year which has come into its own over the last six months. I've clocked up over 3,000 miles, lost 10lbs in weight, gained muscle but still enjoy a typical channel diet. I'm #TonyB77 for those fellow Pelotoners who want to connect and fancy a race.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Anyone who is trying to help deliver sustainable energy and makes money while doing it inspires me. Elon Musk's vision for the world's transition to



I've kept meeting partners and vendors frequently at small events over the summer, sticking to government rules and mainly on a golf course, keeping relationships ticking along. I will certainly miss this year's *CRN* shindig in Battersea



sustainable energy excites me as I love cars, but not the price of a Tesla.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Simply having a secure connection from home so I can access the wide range of applications I use for business.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

My first act as Donald Trump would be to make peace with all those I offended and made suffer at the stupid decisions I made. I would then lift global trade restrictions and jump back in bed with the World Health Organisation. I would divorce my long-suffering wife, so she could meet someone she deserves, then retire with immediate effect to somewhere no-one could find me.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes and no as I've kept meeting partners and vendors frequently at small events over the summer, sticking to government rules and mainly on a golf course, keeping relationships ticking along. The big ones, certainly and will miss this year's *CRN* Awards shindig in Battersea Evolution.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I've said for some time now: if the time scheduled for a meeting is half the time it takes to travel to it, then stop! Not only does the three hours a day you get back help with an improved work-life balance, but you can get much more done by managing your time better. Productivity is king.

Video fatigue is real, but the channel has proved that using collaboration tools can change lives for the better.



# C

- **David Calder**
- **Andrew Carr**
- **Adam Cathcart**
- **James Chadwick**
- **Marc Chang**
- **Debra Coady**
- **Dino Cooper**
- **Edel Creely**
- **Paul Cabbage**



**DAVID CALDER**

*Managing director  
Adarma*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

The resilience of people and their desire to continue to move forward despite COVID-19, including those in our local communities, our customers and our business, Adarma.

From a purely personal point of view, seeing my eldest boy start his first job (at the local chippy), my middle boy go to play rugby with a smile and my youngest boy bring home conkers and insist we string them are all highlights for me.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

I'd invite Henry Ford, Bill Gates and Tim

Berners Lee. They have all changed our world through technology and I'd love to hear them reflect on our world and their contribution.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Ooh embarrassing! I've become obsessed with car restoration TV despite never having worked on a car. Not sure what this means but I almost invited Mike Hall from Rust Valley Restorers.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

I'm not a fan of celebrity and Twitter etc so I struggled with this. I'm really impressed by MS Teams – it has made day-to-day collaboration possible and I'd guess Microsoft have been like a swan, graceful on the surface while working frantically below the surface – so I'm going to give my salute to Microsoft chief executive Satya Nadella while also acknowledging to Zoom CEO Eric Yuan.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

It has to be MS Teams. It has been the



I'm really impressed by MS Teams – I'd guess Microsoft have been like a swan, graceful on the surface while working frantically below the surface

next best thing to being face to face. I also really like to be up to date with the news and the BBC News app has kept me happy there.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

If I were to be completely self-indulgent here, I would pick a world-class racing driver such as Valtteri Bottas – experiencing that level of ability and in-the-moment fearlessness would be incredible.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Massively and I honestly didn't realise how much I would as I think of myself as a bit of a loner. The spontaneity that face-to-face brings and the positivity just seems to be missing through a digital device.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Customers want true partners and this has become amplified by COVID. Everyone in the channel will need to ensure relationships are more than simply transactional.



**ANDREW CARR**

*Director of professional services  
SCC*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Our ability to soldier on during a challenging period on a personal and business level. It has been an extremely rewarding challenge to overcome and the way in which people have pulled together as a society has been incredible to be part of and witness and long may it continue.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Brian Clough, Louis Gerstner (former IBM CEO), Jack Nicklaus.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**



I discovered Taytos Beef and Onion crisps.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Satya Nadella – the way Microsoft has executed during this challenging time has been excellent.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Clearly WiFi takes precedence for everything and I guess I am a Candy Crush and LinkedIn freak!

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I am not sure I would want to be anyone else, but I wouldn't want to have been the prime minister during this period!

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Absolutely I do. As much as being in a physical meeting the social interaction is crucial to our well-being and health.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The channel will see sustained demand in new areas as our customers focus on new areas including consumption models, cybersecurity, remote collaboration and user experience. These tools have always been available but the adoption at pace has accelerated a number of transformation projects. In addition, the way the channel has worked together to keep the lights on has created a new method of co-opetition which will enhance our customers' experience.



**ADAM CATHCART**

*Managing director – partners 9 Group Ltd*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

The birth of our daughter Darcy on 4 March, just before lockdown

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

As a keen follower of North American sports, it would have to be Lebron James, Sidney Crosby and Tom Brady.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Our local pub, The Purefoy Arms in Preston Candover provided us with some amazing lockdown takeaways and kept our fridge stocked with steak for the barbecue.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Jeff Bezos. Amazon's huge market cap increase was positively influenced by the pandemic but its ability to deliver (no pun intended), especially for grocery services when others were struggling in the challenging times, is unparalleled.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

It's hard to look past Teams... I was an avid user pre-pandemic; however, user

adoption across our business and with partners has seen a seismic shift in how we communicate.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I'm pretty happy being me. However, as an ex-GB International Ice Hockey player, the dream as a kid was to play in the NHL in North America and winning the Stanley Cup would be a pretty special week.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Definitely. The channel is renowned for its collaboration and face-to-face events are always great for sharing ideas, discussing challenges and creating new partnerships.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The pandemic has changed many business leaders' views on remote working, opening their eyes to the technology that is available. Some have seen teams overachieve and their employees thrive while enjoying the benefit of an improved home-life balance. I don't believe we will fully go back to the old normal and that will be the same for our customers.



Amazon's ability to deliver (no pun intended), especially for grocery services when others were struggling in the challenging times, is unparalleled



## JAMES CHADWICK

Interim general manager –  
commercial partner  
Microsoft

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

It has to be watching Microsoft and our partners come together during COVID-19, to provide critical services to support our national infrastructure and empower front-line workers to deliver incredible and brave achievements. From clinicians using HoloLens devices to continue critical care in hospitals and keep staff safe, to our involvement in VentilatorChallengeUK, it has been amazing to see how technology has helped at such a significant time.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Well it would be Teams... and it would be Boris Johnson, Donald Trump and Jacinda Ardern. I would want to discuss how they have managed the role of running a country during a crisis. I think we would receive quite the mix of responses and approaches!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

It was a lockdown rite of passage to indulge in a Netflix binge-worthy series, like *Tiger King*. Personally, I spent a lot of time educating myself on the US property market through *Selling Sunset*!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Satya Nadella, our CEO. His approach to prioritising skills as a core business priority should be observed by companies of all sizes. He is focused on how Microsoft can help individuals get the skills needed to succeed in



I never thought I would miss Vegas but I did miss the informal connections and opportunities to catch up with partners, friends and colleagues

technology-based roles and helping to employers find the talent required to ensure business success and UK prosperity.

In response to this we have just announced a five-year campaign to help 1.5 million people build careers in technology and help 300,000 connect to tech job opportunities.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Teams and Teams backgrounds. It's enabled us keep our business and our customers connected through the pandemic and having the ability to change and blur backgrounds means that you can work from virtually anywhere.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I would be Bear Grylls and take the opportunity to get away from the lockdown day to day and be at one with nature. I think a week would be more than enough though.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I do, but it has been great to see how events have adapted following the pandemic. Inspire, our annual partner conference, was fully virtual and fantastic this year. We had more than 7,000 partners from the UK join.

I never thought I would miss Vegas but I did miss the informal connections and opportunities to catch up with partners, friends and colleagues.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

We must learn from this new way of working and find our equilibrium. I envisage that there will be a lot less travel but hope that in turn this will create more meaningful in-person connections.

The channel has certainly faced unprecedented challenges following COVID-19, as every industry has. Businesses now have an opportunity to focus on making quick and easy changes with talent, future readiness and technology, to remain competitive and ensure sustainable growth into the future.



## MARC CHANG

Chief executive  
Block

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

The way my team responded to COVID. Every single one of them provided nothing short of an amazing contribution to keeping our business running while having to accommodate such personal challenge. This was especially true in how they helped all our clients, in particular the NHS. There were so many examples of courage, innovation, hard work and care for other humans which transcended and made more poignant our usual technology work.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

I could actually do with a Zoom party full of laughs right now. So I have decided to invite Will Farrell dressed in his Elf costume; Jürgen Klopp, who I have noticed has started to dress more like a fellow Scouser and Larry David just dressed like Larry David.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I have noticed that I have been paying too much attention to my lawn. For some reason I became obsessed with making it look perfect and have been through a process of scarifying, top dressing, seeding and fertilising. I have even bought a robot lawn mower which I enjoy watching while drinking a cup of tea.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I have generally been inspired by what Bill and Melinda Gates have done



## Technology has helped us stay alive, stay in business and stay connected and sane

to reduce inequality in the world. In particular their work on infectious diseases, which has become more real for many with COVID. I find the intelligent, empathetic and systematic way in which they approach these tremendous challenges amazing. If I want a balanced, competent view on COVID, I listen to what they say and predict. Of course, it is important to ensure that COVID is not just dealt with in the developed world but also quickly addressed in the developing to ensure we save as many lives as possible.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Meditopia – I have found meditating and becoming more aware has really helped keep myself calm and deal with the stress and anxiety that I am sure we have all felt to some level. It has provided a good focused series of meditations to help with motivation, sleep and work.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I would want to be Pep Lindjers so I could work in close proximity to Jürgen Klopp. I have found the way he leads and manages to be nothing short of inspirational.

I am also really interested in how Liverpool FC is run, including the use of data to inform decisions on tactics and transfers, and how Jürgen motivates the team and prepares for matches and competitions. I know he must be doing something right as even Man Utd fans like him – deep down.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I do – I don't really drink so much these days and I am also a bit of a hygiene freak so there have been some positives through hand washing and social distancing. However, part of what I enjoy is meeting clients and being around the energy of my team.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I feel like there has been an increased level of camaraderie among all of us. I have spoken to many of my counterparts and other leaders and there has been a real sense of togetherness through this as life has been put into perspective. People have been willing to share and help.

There has also been a bit of a culture shift as technology people are now seen as sort of rock stars as technology has become so critical in our business and personal lives. It has helped us stay alive, stay in business and stay connected and sane.





**DEBRA COADY**

Legal director and general counsel  
Softcat plc

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Turning 40 at the beginning of lockdown. My planned trip to Paris had to be abandoned but, much to the amusement of our neighbours, my amazing friends turned up on our doorstep to sing happy birthday to me and to deliver my presents, together with a homemade model of the Eiffel Tower!

Workwise, I was nominated for the CRN Woman of the Year Award earlier this year. This felt like a great vote of confidence from Softcat but I was even more surprised – and very chuffed – to

have the external validation of making the shortlist.

I was also promoted to legal director in August and now sit within Softcat's Senior Leadership Team. It's a really exciting role and a great opportunity for me to highlight the contribution that the legal function can make to our business. I've also been really touched by the incredibly positive response from my Softcat friends and colleagues.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Jessica Fostekew, comedian, actor and writer.

Chris Gethard, comedian and host of the podcast "Beautiful Anonymous".

Baroness Brenda Hale, the former Supreme Court judge, perhaps best known for delivering the court's judgement that the prorogation of Parliament last year was void,

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Rewatching *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon, co-founder of Stemettes. I heard her speak at an event last year and thought she was an incredible speaker, really engaging and inspirational.

Her enthusiasm and passion are contagious and I think the work that Stemettes do, including the Outbox 2020 events they've run during lockdown, is just brilliant and a great way of promoting STEM careers and

encouraging more women into sciences and the tech sector.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Video conferencing technology – Teams, Webex and Zoom have been essential for working effectively during the pandemic and we've used WhatsApp and Zoom for home-schooling and staying in touch with friends and family.

Having said that, I've also loved sending and receiving more letters, cards and parcels than usual during lockdown. A well-timed message can really brighten your day but I've kept several of the cards I've received recently because they continue to make me smile. My son and I also really enjoyed creating and sending life-size cut-outs of him to his grandparents!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Gavin Williamson, minister for education, in the hope of being able to rewrite the national curriculum to replace some of the more torturous elements with a love of learning and more practical life skills. Surely knowing how to properly manage your own finances or how to help a friend who is struggling with their mental health would be infinitely more useful than being able to identify a fronted adverbial?

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Lawyers rarely get invited to industry events outside our own profession(!)

but I have missed being able to meet new people and share ideas face to face. Speaking to people online can be less daunting than networking in a room full of strangers but it can also be much harder to make those initial connections.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

We've seen lots of great examples of manufacturers, distributors, resellers and finance providers working together even more closely over the last few months to find workable solutions for our customers. I'm sure that increasingly collaborative and creative approach will continue in the long term, particularly as we deal with the legal and logistical challenges of Brexit.

It also seems inevitable that we'll see a lot more homeworking so, even if we have fewer regular guest appearances from assorted children and pets, I think we'll see a continued reliance on video calls in place of face-to-face meetings. Similarly, I expect to see more events delivered virtually, or perhaps as a hybrid of in-person and online events. It can be harder to create an exciting atmosphere or make those personal connections when we're not face to face but there is also great potential to make these events much more accessible.

If we can find creative ways to provide that sense of occasion and opportunities for those conversations that happen in between the scheduled sessions, virtual events could actually help improve the diversity of both speakers and attendees in a really positive way.



## DINO COOPER

Chief executive  
Viadex

a very strict lockdown in South Africa when it wasn't strictly speaking allowed, it gave me an opportunity to clear my head and set a path.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk, not because of his personal habits and quirky persona, but because of his attitude and the game-changing innovation he is bringing about in batteries, space exploration and transport.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

All the ones who keep us productive, everywhere. Home and remote work was a dream five years ago, it's now a reality, and one that changes our lives in many ways, for the better, for ever.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

My wife, just to see what I am really like to live with!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I do miss face-to-face events, they have their place, and if you want to have them enough, you can still get them done. Safely and sensibly.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

The way we work, with partners, suppliers and clients has changed forever. Fewer meaningless meetings, more focus on what matters.

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

After 15 years in Cape Town, moving back to Surrey, or "mud island" as we lovingly refer to it. During Covid, via five weeks in Greece, proving that nothing can slow you down unless you let it!

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Russell Brand, Larry David, Donald Trump.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Walking Signal Hill every day with our dogs and my son. Even in the heart of



## EDEL CREELY

Managing director  
Arkphire Services

our people with their own personal challenges.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Graham Norton, Phoebe Waller-Bridge and Will Smith. Since COVID, the need for laughter and fun has never been so high on the agenda. Being on a Zoom call with these three celebs would deliver just that for me.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I have never been much of a person for snacking during the day but working from home has changed all that – maybe not such a good thing! I am lucky enough to live and now work in a lovely suburb with a mix of nice coffee shops and bakeries which remained open for business though lockdown.

My guiltiest pleasure on a fine morning was to take the dog for a walk and acquire a nice coffee and pastry along the way to enjoy in the local park. This would set up both me and Toby for the day – his guiltiest pleasure has been to sit under my desk for the remainder of the morning.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

This year it is Elon Musk again. Not only for his continued achievements in space flight with SpaceX but his ambitious vision for sending humans to Mars. I also admire his work with Tesla, not only in how he has transformed the electric car market but for the innovations in renewable energy. A

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

It has to be the acquisition of Trilogy Technologies by Arkphire Group. Almost as soon as we had started to work on integration of the services business, which is the part of the Group I am responsible for, COVID-19 entered our lives and everything changed.

The way in which our people responded to the crisis is something I am proud of: looking after our customers' needs in responding to the rapid transformation to working from home, dealing with the integration of our teams while getting to know new people in a virtual world all while supporting

Tesla could be my next guiltiest pleasure with little or no guilt.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

There isn't one piece anymore. The mobile phone without question is the most important in allowing secure access to business applications and collaboration anytime, anyplace, but also the central point for staying connected with family, friends and what's happening in the world.

Next in line is my iPad which is my favourite piece of technology, brilliantly mobile, a bigger screen and I just love the ease of use of this little gem. However, as we continue in 'working from anywhere' mode, all tech collaboration tools have become so important to my working life, with comfort being high on the agenda. My latest gadget I've acquired is the Jabra Speakerphone so I can give my ears a rest from the headphones and ensure a quality voice experience while on my many daily Teams calls.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd be myself on holiday, with all technology switched off, a pile of books and a house on the Wild Atlantic Way (good weather a bonus but not essential).

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely, virtual events will simply never give you the same experience. I am missing all types of face-to-face gatherings whether it's the buzz of a

room full of people gathered for a mutual experience or a one-to-one with a customer or colleague.

Networking has been an important staple of our industry and there is no question that we all miss this. However, thanks to technology we have found new ways of staying connected with our colleagues, peers, business partners and customers.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Before the pandemic, businesses didn't have to think too hard about how to interact with customers. Changes in human attitudes and behaviours has forced organisations to respond, but it is a mistake to think that this is all temporary. COVID has changed the experience of being a customer, an employee and a human. With technology as an enabler of change, the channel has an opportunity to be central to this in how we engage with our customers. We must understand our customers' needs, embrace digital acceleration and build our service offerings to ensure that technology is a key enabler. However, with more people working remotely, human connection is still a high priority customer need and as the channel, we must keep this at the heart of our business model.



Virtual events will never give the same experience



## PAUL CUBBAGE

Managing director  
Target Components Ltd

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

We've continued to set all kinds of records going into 2020, which is great for the team and a reflection of the hard work they've put in over the last couple of years – and amazing given so many are homeworking for the first time. The highlight is probably setting a new record month in March that seemed unbeatable, then beating it within a few months.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

The three wise monkeys would work well on a Zoom call.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Nothing exciting, but like most of the country home drinking and box sets.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

My niece is a nurse in a COVID ward. She has sores from wearing PPE for hours at a time. Yet some people complain about briefly having to wear a small mask in shops. Not a tech figurehead, but for inspiration this year, we should look at those in the COVID front line.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

The laptop (as usual), streaming services ... and the fridge.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Donald Trump. I'd say and do only rational things just to see the reaction.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely. We recently passed what would have been the date for this year's Target Open Day. It really brought home that we should have been having a drink and catch-up with our customers. I'm looking forward to being able to do it again and generally get out and about visiting customers.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

More homeworking, which has already made it easier to take on new staff without worrying about where to fit everyone in. And there's a much bigger IT footprint now than there was pre-lockdown, which is great for longer-term demand for our customers and for us.



# D

- **Mike Danson**
- **Adam Davison**
- **Jacqueline de Rojas CBE**
- **Emma de Sousa**
- **Scott Dodds**
- **Paul Dove**
- **Jason Downes**
- **Chris Dunning**



## MIKE DANSON

Chief executive  
Natilik

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Surviving the lockdown period and home schooling with a happy wife and kids!

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Three authors of books I'm waiting to read: Simon Sinek (*The Infinite Game*), BJ Fogg (*Tiny Habits*) and Lisa Damour (*Untangled: Guiding Teenage Girls Through the Seven Transitions into*



I was wearing shorts until September, even in the office

*Adulthood*) – I have three daughters!

I think they would be great company and they could discuss the key parts of their books without me having to read them all!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Wearing shorts from March to September – even in the office.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I think Chuck Robbins, Cisco CEO, continues to make lots of great decisions.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Netflix!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Jürgen Klopp and replay the recent Aston Villa game.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I read an article in *The Economist* the other day which said we have “a rare opportunity to rewire the world of work”. I hope we all take advantage of this.



## ADAM DAVISON

Sales and marketing director  
Cloud Distribution

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Like the majority of us, unexpected holiday cancellations meant a change of plan so my energies were diverted to home improvement – garden improvement, to be exact. After much hard graft and blisters, we now have the most amazing outdoor kitchen complete with a fabulous pizza oven. Roll on next summer.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Michael McIntyre would be invited because he makes me laugh and let's face it, we all have a man-drawer. I'm officially

Rita Ora's biggest fan (much to my wife's disgust) so without her there would be no party! And third, a bit of a stretch on the celebrity angle, but perhaps Boris Johnson could attend to make sure we're actually sticking to the social distancing rules (if he actually knew what they are)...

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Watching *Escape to the Chateau*, a TV series which follows the highs and lows of Dick and Angel Strawbridge, who bought and renovated a really old, run-down chateau in France. Who do you think inspired me to build an outdoor kitchen? Next stop: a chateau in France!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk – I love how he's driving and reinventing the industries he plays in. He's somewhat controversial, but hey, he's interesting! He would make a great Bond villain. All that's missing is a white cat.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Without a doubt RingCentral has proved invaluable – video, messaging, phone calls – everything is covered. It made our transition to working from home almost seamless. Oh, and I couldn't have made it through lockdown without the JustEat app... Takeaway anyone?

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd love to be in Stefano Domenicali's shoes for a week. As the new boss of Formula 1, I'd overturn all the rules that have stifled innovation and removed technological advances. The new rules and regulations have turned a once exciting sport into a very dull traffic jam for two hours. It needs to change.

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I miss the social element of getting together with colleagues and partners because that's hard to replicate via video but from a get-stuff-done perspective, I think most of us probably wasted lots of travel time attending events that, in hindsight, could have been done remotely.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The channel ecosystem is one that's always been full-on in terms of energy, buzz and noise. There's definitely less chat these days – conversations have become more focused with defined business outcomes and actions. This can only be positive as it will drive productivity, efficiency and ultimately growth. Who doesn't want that?



I'd overturn all the Formula 1 rules that have stifled innovation and removed technological advances



## **JACQUELINE DE ROJAS CBE**

*President  
techUK*

### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

My personal highlight of 2020 is that our eldest son Jack and his fiancé managed to get married.

I am so proud of them for demonstrating such resilience during the pandemic which forced them to adapt to constantly changing circumstances and handling relationships with family and friends sensitively, and for creating the most beautiful and intimate of weddings. Adversity forced them to be creative and it bodes well for their relationship going forward.

### **Which celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Alicia Keys – she's seen so many sides of fame, what has she learned? She can come if she sings *This Girl is on Fire* for me. Yuval Noah Harari – so many questions to ask him about how history is important in preparing for the future.

The Dalai Llama – he is so reflective and full of wisdom. He is the one who reminds us "If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito in the room."

Tony Blair – whatever your politics, he makes a strong case for the use of technology in government, society, economy and planet.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

My husband and I went to Venice with friends some years ago and discovered Negroni cocktails. During lockdown they have been our guilty pleasure.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

It has to be Anne-Marie Imafidon who founded the Stemettes. She has just been voted as the most influential woman in UK IT and I am so pleased that my friend and brilliant role model Anne-Marie has been acknowledged for the tremendous contribution she makes to the tech sector.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

It has to be my iPad. I know it sounds ordinary, but it has allowed me to

stay connected to friends, family and colleagues during a very tricky time.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I would love to be my 40-year-old self again. It would take me back to a time when my precious mum did not have dementia. It would give me the opportunity to cherish those moments I took for granted and to ask her all the questions that I never asked her.

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes! My favourite part of any event is the unexpected introductions and connections you make – it is not necessarily about the names you recognise on the guestlist but rather the new people you meet.

A lot of the events I go to are focused on inspiring a diverse group into considering tech careers and I was concerned that this move to purely virtual meetings would create a barrier to entry for those who are not so well versed in tech tools. While I'm aware it has for some, I am delighted to say that I've seen many people of all ages and backgrounds embrace tech. One of my greatest virtual events was discussing why I chose tech with 100 seven to 11-year-olds, a scenario that would have previously played out in the school hall!

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

That's a big question – and I am sure it will be different for all of us. However, COVID will now mean that



work is no longer a place, it is where you are. It will mean that relationships will have to be built and nurtured virtually, which implies that we will have to find new ways to establish trust and credibility. Creating competitive advantage will rely on you demonstrating points of difference via excellent references or ratings and in terms of customer service, our tolerance for slow service is lower than before.

I believe that operating virtually means that there is an expectation for an instant response capability or an always-on experience and so we will have to rely on automation in order to achieve that. Life online is faster and less forgiving in terms of loyalty, so we have to achieve a higher level of excellence.



My husband and I went to Venice some years ago and discovered Negroni cocktails. During lockdown they have been our guilty pleasure



## EMMA DE SOUSA

Senior vice president  
Insight

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

It's been a difficult year for many of us, but in the midst of all the chaos I'm proud that Insight is providing a supportive environment for its employees. This isn't just talk – Insight has been recognised a number of times by Great Place to Work for its excellence in employee wellbeing, and this year we added to that even further.

Insight UK was ranked in the top 10 'Best Workplaces in Tech – Large' category and also ranked highly for 'Best Workplaces for Women – Large', paying testament to the opportunities that we provide.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

International human rights barrister Amal Clooney would be my first pick. Strong, independent, she's a force of nature. Although her marriage to George Clooney has thrust her into the media spotlight, she is a success in her own right. There's a wonderful interview with her in *Vogue*, where she describes not having enough confidence in her own abilities in the early stages of her career and how it's spurred her on to help others. The way she inspires and leads really resonates with me – she would be fascinating to talk to.

I'm a massive *Strictly Come Dancing* fan so I'd have to have Claudia Winkleman for the insider gossip. I also think Claudia is one of the hardest-working women in showbiz, there wouldn't be a dull moment with her on the call!

When it's time to let our hair down, Calvin Harris could get everyone up on their feet with an energetic party playlist.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

It's a relatively simple pleasure, but I've really taken to swapping my usual high heels for a pair of carpet slippers during virtual meetings.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Everybody has been talking about the \$850bn added to Microsoft's value this year. But I've been equally inspired by the way Satya Nadella has achieved it. He has put people first and ensured that the

whole business is willing to join him on his journey, while still giving each part of the business the support and freedom it needs. It really resonates with my own philosophy; you need to trust your people, and help them bring out the best in themselves.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Microsoft Teams has played a crucial role, setting me up for the start of the working day and helping me to pull all the threads together before shutting my laptop. Deliveroo has also played a huge role in keeping me properly fed and watered over the last few months!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd love to be an international journalist working on the front line of world events, getting a first-hand understanding of the real stories behind the headlines and sharing the experiences and stories of my subjects with the world.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Of course. Whether for a family celebration or work conference, nothing really beats meeting face to face. However, there are also new opportunities that the switch to virtual brings. One of our flagship events, the Insight Technology Conference, is going virtual this year. With no physical restrictions, it is possible for us to hold the event for longer than we usually would, so we can share more content

with our clients, and offer tailored seminars to specific sectors.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Now that we have all been forced to embrace working remotely, many people who were previously nay-sayers have been won over. Of course many people working in the channel will go back to offices when it is safe to do so, but some of our working practices have now changed forever.

We'll see a lot more client contact taking place remotely, which in turn is going to accelerate the speed of business, as people realise there's no need to spend time arranging physical meetings.

We're also going to see a greater reliance on services. Clients need all the help they can get to ensure their business is resilient, not only in terms of technology but skills, support and advice. As a result, we'll see more organisations or partnerships that can give clients all they need.



I'd love to be an international journalist working on the front line of world events, getting a first-hand understanding of the real stories behind the headlines



## **SCOTT DODDS**

*Chief executive  
Ultima Business Solutions*



If I could be anyone else for a week, I would be a concert pianist. I envy people who can create music with their hands and imagination



### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

The energy, resilience, engagement and positivity of all our teams under the personal and business pressures of a global pandemic. I'm very proud of everyone for their focus on doing the right thing for our customers, while navigating through some of the most challenging times for individuals and businesses that we have ever lived through.

### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Neil Armstrong, Alan Turing, Peter Sellers.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Too much wine.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Bill Gates. He predicted the global pandemic and continues to be a huge force for good in addressing global health issues.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Microsoft Teams and Jabra devices.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

A concert pianist. I envy people who can create music with their hands and imagination.

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes – we need to balance the digital and human interaction, particularly for those in the early stage of their careers.

Work-life rebalancing is here to stay.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Unnecessary travel will reduce and the sales and technical engagement with customers will continue to be more digital-first.

Cloud becomes the strategic technology infrastructure core of most customers, delivered by automation-led managed services.



## JASON DOWNES

Managing director  
Modality Systems

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Joining Modality in February this year. It's a fantastic business with some truly exceptional people. I'm very proud that we have continued to operate to the highest standard for our customers and our people, despite having to work remotely across our global teams.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Firstly, I would change the invite to a Microsoft Teams party! I am mad keen on rugby so I would invite Sir Clive Woodward, Martin Johnson and Sean Fitzpatrick.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Some lovely wine delivered direct from our local wine shop.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Nat Friedman, CEO of GitHub continues to find new ways to grow, innovate and set standards for remote working and getting business done.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Teams is my working world, enabling connectivity and engagement across our global customers, teams and partners.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

The scientist who finds a cure or vaccine for COVID. Too many people are suffering, too many have died, and everyone's world has turned upside down.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely, I enjoy planned and non-planned interactions, meeting new people and building positive relationships which are so key to doing business.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

It will increase flexibility of how, where and when people work. This will be a positive advantage for employees and employers. In-person meetings will have to have deliver real value and will focus on relationship building and creativity.



## PAUL DOVE

Director of business development  
– SCC UK Services  
SCC



I've been spending too much time and money on my outdoor bar/kitchen and wine but I don't have to book a table and it doesn't close at 10pm

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

From a business perspective the breadth of services, including launching our public cloud brand Oworx during lockdown, together with the innovation and flexibility that SCC has delivered for our customers during the COVID pandemic.

On a personal front the birth of my first grandchild in April, a beautiful 'lockdown' baby.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Gordon Ramsay to rate my food, Jonny Wilkinson for rugby chat and Russell Howard for up-to-the-minute topical humour.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Spending too much time and money on my outdoor bar/kitchen and wine but I don't have to book a table and it doesn't close at 10pm.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I am sure a predictable answer, Jeff Bezos for his continual ability to challenge conventional thinking.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Microsoft Teams. While it's not perfect, it has absolutely transformed the way in which we interact remotely.

We have used it extensively for business meetings, customer meetings



and presentations and to help maintain social interaction with colleagues.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I'd join Gordon, Gino and Fred on their next road trip, ridiculous fun.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Absolutely. An enormous amount of knowledge can be shared very quickly being with peers, colleagues and customers in a business or social environment. Videoconferencing tools are a pretty effective replacement for face-to-face meetings but when screen sharing much of the video benefit is lost. In our COVID-safe new normal we must ensure the balance of office-based working and remote working is a productive one and not a compromise.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

COVID has only accelerated most businesses' need to modernise. The speed at which many organisations have delivered this change has orphaned previously planned projects, leaving many outdated. This presents a great opportunity for our consultancy and professional services business. I am sure we will all travel less as we and our customers become less centralised and we must deliver solutions that effectively support distributed working.



**CHRIS DUNNING**

CEO and founder  
TechQuarters

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Deciding to make the move to Bournemouth out of London. Now we are remote working more, the possibility to live somewhere with such great water sports and countryside for cycling was too hard to resist for this triathlete!

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I think like a lot of people, Deliveroo and Netflix.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Arnold Schwarzenegger for the 80s



Now we are remote working, the possibility to live somewhere with great water sports and countryside for cycling was too hard to resist for this triathlete



action movie insights, Alistair Brownlee for the triathlon tips and Jodie Comer for behind the scenes of *Killing Eve* stories.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Daniel Schulman from PayPal, as not only have they managed to grow during the pandemic but they used their success to provide coronavirus relief loans to small businesses that were struggling.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Microsoft Teams because it's kept me in touch with everyone at TQ and our customers. The video calling has enabled us to actually keep being sociable and connected.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

At this moment, I'd probably be one of the astronauts on the International Space Station. The opportunity to see what it was like to be in space and look back at Earth (while having a week off from hearing about COVID) would be great.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

With my team, yes, but we are still trying to do smaller group social events where we can. With prospects we've embraced videoconferencing and live webinars – so we actually aren't missing the in-person seminars and meetings much at all!

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I think even before COVID so many people were sceptical about homeworking and if it would work. Now the whole world has gone through a six-month, mandatory test run – ensuring technology and our services support this will be a must going forward.

A large, stylized graphic featuring the letters 'E' and 'S' in white with a black outline. The 'E' is on the left, and the 'S' is on the right, both set against a vibrant red background. The 'S' is partially cut off by the right edge of the frame. The letters have a slight 3D effect with a drop shadow.

# ES

- **Simon England**



## SIMON ENGLAND

Chief executive  
Nuvias Group

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Spending a lot more evenings with my partner instead of on the road, which has convinced both of us to head for the aisle – as soon as we can also have a proper party to celebrate it!

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Sean Connery, Sir Michael Caine, Russell Crowe.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Doing more than a couple of hot summer day video calls while wearing a business shirt and Aussie thongs (flip flops).

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Bill Gates for taking a strong stance on the US COVID-19 handling, and putting up with all the conspiracy B.S.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My broadband connection, my notebook, and Teams.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd be Boris Johnson and attempt to cut to the chase on the EU trade agreement.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes, very much, most of all for the interaction and social connection. However, less-valuable events that purely broadcast information are off my diary for good.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

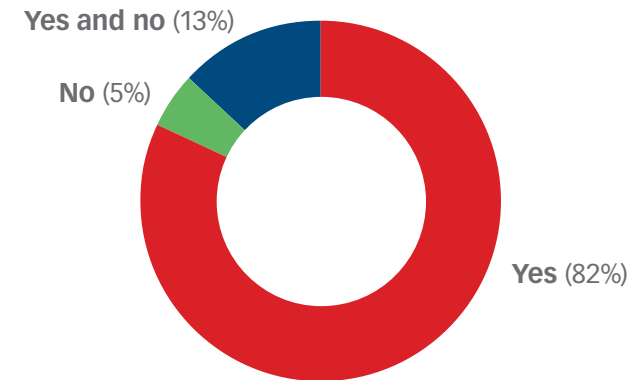
Less travel if not adding real value, using VCs to stay connected and on track. Then focusing on face-to-face meetings to truly add value, move the needle, advance strategic agendas.



## Absence makes the heart grown fonder...

The vast majority – **82 per cent** – of A-Listers said that they missed face-to-face events, with many acknowledging that while virtual alternatives got the job done, there was no substitute for meeting in person.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?



With events now being held virtually, not having to travel was mentioned as a bonus by **8 per cent**, and **2 per cent** admitted that they don't miss the hangovers after a big event.



8%



2%





# F

- **Jeanette Forbes**
- **Mark Forster**
- **Cliff Fox**
- **Matt Franklin**



## JEANETTE FORBES

Chief executive  
PCL Group



The tech figurehead who has inspired me most this year is Elon Musk and his SpaceX project

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Recently receiving the Significant Contribution Award at the SPE Offshore Achievement Awards I'm only the second woman to ever receive this award and the first British woman.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Peter Kay, Ricky Gervais and John Bishop. That party would be full of laughs.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

It has to be chocolate. My willpower went right out the window!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

My inspiration is Elon Musk and his SpaceX project.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My broadband/WiFi connection. We need the infrastructure to make technology work!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I would be the entrepreneurial ambassador/advisor to government. It is so important for government to understand the real underlying issues around running businesses. Ask those who are at the coalface, trying to make it work every day of the year and this was pre-COVID-19.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes, indeed I do. Social face-to-face interaction is so important. You can often tell a person's receptiveness by their body language. Zoom and Teams cannot offer you that!

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Through technology, businesses in all sectors survived. We need to look at the supply chain issues. Whoever thought we would not be able to source laptops? Those in the supply chain that increased their prices beyond their normal percentage mark-up need to take a good look at themselves. You did this sector no favours.





## MARK FORSTER

Managing director  
Comms-care and Ingram Micro  
company



Lizzo is one of my favourite people to follow on all things social and my Spotify most-played artist so a virtual brandy with her would be great



Cosmopolitan UK

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

The response that the people of Comms-care and Ingram Micro have continually demonstrated throughout the pandemic. I am sure this will be a common answer, but this has genuinely been my highlight. Watching our people not only cope but excel in such circumstances has been humbling and rewarding. We all handle crisis differently and seeing first-hand the support which people have provided, often unconsciously to one another is beyond words.

We have come through this pandemic with industry awards and nominations, added vendor elite specialisations and enabled our partners to transform to a new way of working. We could not have done any of it without the passion and togetherness of our people – they amaze me.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Ricky Gervais would be there, not only for his comedy, but I also enjoy his direct and no-nonsense approach to some of

the important debates. Although I am sure this will be a popular choice,

Sir David Attenborough would need to be there as I love all things animal and nature.

My final choice would be Lizzo. She is one of my favourite people to follow on all things social and my Spotify most-played artist so

I think a virtual brandy with her would be great.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

When you are stuck inside, the outside looks even more beautiful. I spent a lot of time bird watching of all things – if the 20-year-old me could see me getting excited about a lovely bullfinch or nuthatch I think he would be having a word! I'm still trying to tempt the lesser spotted woodpecker, I live in hope.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Not any one person, but any person in tech who does something beyond their social posts. The person who does not just write a blog on making STEM better in schools but who goes into them to talk and inspire the next generation.

Who doesn't think that a black picture with #BLM is enough but instead instills a real culture of inclusion and diversity within their everyday life. We have many challenges we have to get better on and while words are great and so important, action is better – those with action inspire me...anyone with action.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Just Eat and Amazon. If you are locked down it feels better with a burger in one hand, a new squirrel-proof bird feeder, a letter opener and a chainsaw in the other I genuinely bought these items during lockdown for some reason.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

My perfect daughter. I think it's tough for teens these days and it would be great to see the world through her lens and maybe take lessons on what we can do to improve it. What would I do? Sit her business GCSE as she hates it. Maybe I could help.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes – so much communication occurs non-verbally and I just don't think it comes across the same virtually. I am massively impressed by some of the innovation that some companies have done to build a personal experience on a virtual platform though.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think it's safe to say that we will not be having many meetings for meetings' sake in person any time soon! With such great adoption of virtual platforms, I think that when the world returns to some sort of new normal there will be far greater scrutiny on the meetings we attend and the meetings we have online.

I believe the channel will be more important than ever with customers not only asking how they can use technology to grow and succeed but also how to adopt technology for business efficiency and perhaps even survival. The channel needs to adapt to have the answers to these tough questions and those that do not will quickly be displaced. How ethically a business has operated throughout the COVID challenge will also begin to creep into buying decisions – as well it should.





## CLIFF FOX

Group chief operating officer  
pure technology group (PTG)

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Seeing how well our people handled lockdown, including the effort they applied to communications and helping customers deal with adversity.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

It would have to be Microsoft Teams, not Zoom, but cameos from Sir David Attenborough, Chris Rock and Kate Bush would be my choices.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Home deliveries courtesy of Hebden

Bridge's [www.vocationbrewery.com](http://www.vocationbrewery.com). I wonder if I'll get a discount for the name check?

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk. The SpaceX Dragon manned launch stands out this year along with Neuralink, and Tesla. Boldness doesn't get near describing the vision.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

It has to be Microsoft Teams doesn't it?

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Jeff Bezos but not for a week; a day would be enough time to make the bank transfers.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes. We had some unique customer events and parties lined up this year, so that's been a disappointment for everyone. Virtual can be good (and bad) but people like to meet up.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think a lot of organisations will rethink commercial property, remote working, travel and expenses in light of this year's events.



## MATT FRANKLIN

Chief executive  
Roc

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Getting married to Sarah during lockdown despite a couple of postponements.

### Which celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

James Corden, Al Pacino, Cameron Diaz, Ben Stiller.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Lots of homemade cakes.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?



The channel will require more lateral thinking and deeper client engagements to succeed over the long term with everything provided as a service

Elon Musk – sticking to his principles and achieving amazing results despite some serious setbacks.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Google Hangouts for remote learning for the four girls.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd be my dog Hugo and enjoy having no responsibilities and catch up on some much-needed sleep.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Very much so...but not all of them!

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

The channel will require more lateral thinking and deeper client engagements to succeed over the long term with everything provided as a service.

# G

- **Yolanta Gill**
- **Nick Glynne**
- **Stephen Green**
- **Tim Griffin**
- **Justin Griffiths**
- **Rufus Grig**
- **Mukesh Gupta**



## YOLANTA GILL

Chief executive  
European Electronique

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

After having several of my exciting overseas trips cancelled and realising that I wasn't going to get to visit Japan or drive California Highway 1, I decided that a road trip through the Lake District and then up through Scotland would be a great idea, and something that I had been wanting to do for a long time.

The trip was fantastic, taking in among others, Loch Lomond, Skye, Loch Ness and Stirling – all with amazing scenery, loads of walking and inevitably having to brave the rain. Something I didn't anticipate however was having to buy gloves and a scarf in August in order to tackle the Striding Edge Helvellyn walk!

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Sir David Attenborough; Olga Tokaczuk, last year's Nobel prize winner for literature and Barack Obama.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

A large glass of wine – or two!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk – he's certainly very driven with his various pursuits and literally reaching for the stars. A colourful and somewhat controversial character, with his wide interest in different areas of technology, I think it's fair to say that he is trying to push the boundaries and is intent on making his mark.



I decided that a road trip through the Lake District and then up through Scotland would be a great idea. The trip was fantastic, taking in among others, Loch Ness



### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

For me it is technology as a whole which has come into its own. During lockdown it has given us the ability to continue to communicate not only on a business level but on a personal level, to exercise, to take part in social events and give us a window to the wider world while our own environments shrank.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

My dog Peggy, who has no responsibilities and is very spoiled! Alternatively, Julius Caesar so I could conquer the world – although I think I'll give the ending a miss!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I do, very much. I enjoy the personal, networking contact and although virtual

meetings have certainly come into their own and proved to be a very able substitute, and will continue to do so, I am hopeful that in the not too distant future we will be able again to take part in conferences and suchlike.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Firstly, I think we, as an industry, have been fortunate in that while we had to change our business practices in response to COVID, the impact has not been as great as it has for other types of business. COVID has forced the channel to look closely at their business activities, the ability to react quickly and to modify the structure of businesses to meet the challenges posed. These changes will be with us well into the future with more staff adopting a hybrid working life, with long-standing and accepted policies and operations having to be streamlined in order to adapt.





## NICK GLYNNE

Chief executive  
Buy It Direct



My personal highlight of 2020 has been managing to keep the business going during the scary first few weeks of lockdown

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Managing to keep the business going during the scary first few weeks of lockdown.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

That's an unbearable idea!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Leaving the chaos of home to go to the office everyday.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

The ft.com for its great journalism.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

A *Newsnight* interviewer.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Not one bit.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Less overnight expenses.



## STEPHEN GREEN

SVP & CTO  
NTT Ltd

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

That's easy, joining NTT Ltd UK&I.

### Which celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Greta Thunberg as I admire her bravery and gutsiness on her position which I expect will have a lasting impact as sustainability becomes an important business topic. Nelson Mandela – he is no longer with us, but I have immense respect for his empathy and vision and how he contributed to my country.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I wish I could say doing a call in my shorts, but it's been winter in the southern hemisphere, so sneaking a snack on a call. I did do one wearing a beanie.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I traded one of my celebs on the Zoom call so I could have two figureheads.

Jordan Liggitt – one word, Kubernetes. May I add, "Thank you". Marc Benioff – I like Marc for what he stands for: giving, equality and walking the walk.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

FreeNAS – I've taken the weekends to build a NAS and microsegment my data! Oh and beer, does that count?

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Alan Garner. Vegas, because everybody must do it just once.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes! I love the new efficiency but it's not the way you build friendships.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

COVID has been an inflection point of change. We can expect to see long-lasting change at the core of how we do business, what we call work and how we do it. Business processes and engagements will continue to digital, be optimised and accelerate the continued move to software.



## TIM GRIFFIN

Managing director  
DCC Technology

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Not putting on any weight! Seriously I'm just so grateful for my family and colleagues and the triumph of the human spirit.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Steve Jobs, Robin Williams, Victoria Wood ... or living; Piers Morgan, Michelle Obama, Olivia Colman.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Really...you think I'm going to say that here?

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk – think BIG, dreams come true when you stay awake! Drive hard, stay the course, persistent execution.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Amazon Prime.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Trump; change my mind and right a few things.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I see the continued acceleration of digital in all its forms and a thickening of the operational layer of distribution, greater 24/7 and last-mile execution including DTC and DTB all a consequence of shifting social and economic dynamics over an extended term. We have many quarters still to navigate!



I'd be Trump; change my mind and right a few things



## JUSTIN GRIFFITHS

UK managing director  
Infinigate

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

I have three. Seeing son #1 get accepted on a Prince's Trust course, seeing son #2 get his job back at Harry Potter Studios after being made redundant during COVID, and joining Infinigate UK.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

David Jason: I love *Only Fools and Horses*. Sigourney Weaver: my favourite film is *Aliens*. Jürgen Klopp: I'm a big red.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Red wine.



COVID has highlighted how important technology is in our personal and business lives. Without it right now the world would be a very lonely place

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk – there are no boundaries of innovation and determination, if you have money.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Zoom and Amazon.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I would be Toto Wolfe. I would then get my autistic son a job at Mercedes as his passion is to work in F1.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

It has changed the way we do business. It's also highlighted how important technology is in both our personal and business lives in terms of how we communicate. Without it right now the world would be a very lonely place.



## RUFUS GRIG

Chief strategy officer  
Maintel

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

At work – helping tens of thousands of our customers switch to homeworking and keeping frontline staff in hospitals, care homes and local authorities connected and communicating delivering key services.

Personally – a sell-out reunion gig for our band. That was on 4 January. Frankly 2020 has been a bit downhill since then.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Eddie Izzard, Graham Garden, and Yo-Yo Ma.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Working at home in bare feet when it was hot in the spring and summer.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I think the tech community has in general been terrific this year in supporting the efforts against the pandemic – but I might have to go for Bill Gates again for his work supporting vaccine development.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My hands-free speakerphone (an Avaya B109 for those who care). It has saved my ears from death by headphones.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd be an astronaut on the International Space Station and I would watch the Earth from up high, do summersaults in zero-G and generally be in space.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely! But not at ExCeL or the NEC.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

It has accelerated cloud and digital transformation by at least three to five years – it's like we've time travelled to 2023. This will have profound implications for anyone who thought they could gently navigate from legacy to next gen.



## MUKESH GUPTA

Founder and chief executive  
e92plus

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Working from home regularly for the first time has been enjoyable – more time spent with my kids, improving my cooking and learning to play the piano.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

I think we're all used to seeing our friends and having fun on Zoom, so I don't need a celebrity to provide entertainment.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Finding the opportunity for quality time in the garden. I've found a new love of chipping! But as a guilty pleasure, binge-watching series on Netflix is there too.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Zoom's leadership have demonstrated the importance of having the right product, at the right time, and delivering for your customers. No-one predicted this situation, but they've made the most of it, and been very agile in responding to intense customer and market feedback.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

It's hard to avoid the obvious: Netflix!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Being Jeff Bezos, and then getting divorced to make my wife the second-richest person in the world would be interesting!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I miss the personal engagement, body language and human interaction of face-to-face events – but I think we've also learned how we'd like to change them for the better in the future.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

It might mean a long-term recession, but the way the channel has embraced and enabled digital transformation and remote working for customers has fundamentally changed all our working lives. Making a positive change while still being able to grow our businesses and be successful is a fantastic opportunity, and one we all need to embrace.



# H

- **Helen Hall**
- **Howard Hall**
- **Simon Harbridge**
- **James Hardy**
- **Roger Harry**
- **Gary Haycock-West**
- **Darren Hedley**
- **Joe Hemani**
- **Joey Hemingbrough**
- **Carl Henriksen**
- **Jenny Hicks**
- **Simone Hindmarch**
- **Guy Hocking**
- **Claire Hopkins**
- **Mary Hunter**
- **Donavan Hutchinson**



## HELEN HALL

Managing director  
AVR International Limited

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Following great success in the business I purchased my dream car: a brand-new Aston Martin DBS Superleggera Volante in September – pure joy!

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Tom Hardy, Cillian Murphy and Bradley Cooper, no explanations needed!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Playing with my daughter, throwing biscuits down from the window while she's been out playing in the garden and hoping Daddy didn't notice.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Cindy Rose OBE, president of Microsoft UK. Her history in media and comms around the convergence of these into the user's experience has been a great example of vision for the industry.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My iPad, as the ability to do everything all the time quickly has been a godsend. There is no messing with selecting the right audio or drivers, it just works. The camera even seems to know how to light my best side for all those videoconferences.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?



Following great success in the business I purchased my dream car: a brand-new Aston Martin DBS Superleggera Volante – pure joy!

The famous F1 driver from the 70s, James Hunt, probably during the Hesketh years. The phrase “work hard, play hard” could have been invented for him. When you live with the risks the drivers did back then you realise that you need to make it happen now.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

No, I like to meet on a more personal level. I'm missing more the meetings with our customers face to face; we always produce so much in a live environment and I can't wait to get back out there.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

What does not kill you makes you stronger. Watching my team continue to work at the same speed from home has been a source of real pride. It's not just the tools, it's the commitment I have seen.





## HOWARD HALL

Chief executive  
DTP Group

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

My work with a couple of charities that I am heavily involved with. The first as co-chair of Byte Night, a national IT industry rough sleeping charity, where we were able to pivot to a family-orientated sleep rough at home event, called Boycott Your Bed in support of Action 4 Children. It was delivered with a celeb-laden evening of virtual entertainment and activities, and raised over £400,000. More locally helping set up This is Me Yorkshire, a charity focused on highlighting mental health initiatives and support in the workplace.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Having watched a hero of mine Freddie Flintoff show his true mettle in the last few weeks by openly talking about his mental health journey he has to be head of my Zoom table. To lighten the mood his fellow *Top Gear* mate Paddy McGuinness, and to balance the Yorkshire/Lancashire party ratio I would invite honorary Yorkshireman and Leeds United manager Marcelo Bielsa to talk about coaching for performance and his PowerPoint presentation skills.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

M&S salted caramel popcorn – fortunately they come in multi-packs.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

On a WW level my friend Paul Hunter at HPE, always a big supporter of DTP, but his rise within HP/HPE has been sensational and well deserved. On a local level another friend, Gary Parlett, founder and CEO of Leeds-based Answer Digital, who during the lockdown completed the transition of his business to employee ownership.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Its got to be my HP Dragonfly Laptop, oh sorry I was just dreaming I had one! But seriously there are lots of comms and collaboration apps that pre-COVID were part of daily life, but that are now what we build our working life around such



My guiltiest lockdown pleasure has been M&S salted caramel popcorn – fortunately they come in multi-packs

as Zoom and Teams. The one I like the most is Mural, a virtual, visual, whiteboard app.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Donald Trump, as I am looking a little pasty and need to top up my fake tan!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Some days yes, and I am sure that as the dark winter nights draw in it will be even more so, but I am actually a little shy and a bit of an introvert so I can manage without most of the time, even though



it feels like we are all cast members of Groundhog Day II the movie as the days blend into one.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

The paperless office has been talked about for decades, but I think COVID has definitely put it back on the agenda, and it has certainly accelerated the long overdue transformation of the managed print services sector.





**SIMON HARBRIDGE**

Chief executive  
Stone

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

For me the massive positive of the year has been the demonstration of how drastically and really quite quickly changing our behaviour can benefit the environment; a lesson for us all and an opportunity to reconsider how we are living our lives and our impact on the planet. As Professor Piers Forster at the University of Leeds said: "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to really change the direction of society."

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Brandon Flowers from The Killers, to



Let's face it, we've seen five years of digital transformation shoehorned into the last five months and there's no going back! What new office requirement?

perform. You can't beat a few good tunes from The Killers!

Greta Thunberg: I have a daughter who is similarly autistic and Greta is a hero for her in terms of facing the fear and getting out there.

Elon Musk, to bring his mind-reading technology, so that Zoom is no longer even necessary.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Probably exercise during work hours at my convenience, either Joe Wicks, or golf and three regular meals prepared myself – a much healthier and balanced lifestyle.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Claire Boonstra, founder of Operation Education. I highly recommend her TED talk (Amsterdam). She studied civil engineering (which we have in common), and is a female leader in tech, saying: "If education is your only way out, it better make sense."

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Microsoft Teams.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Sun Tzu. An amazing leader whose advice is still applicable to today's innovators. He said: "In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity."

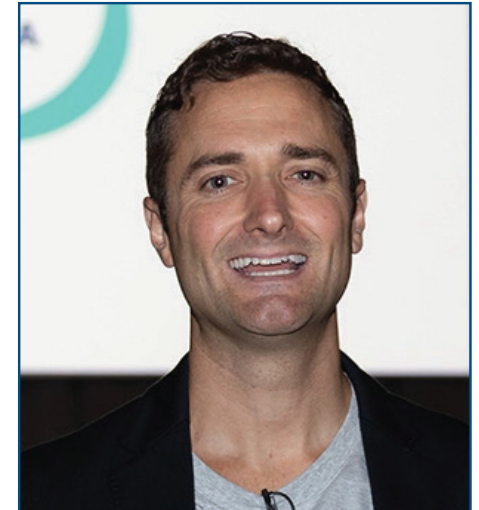
I would compose a new treatise/masterpiece on strategy, on how to stay "serene and inscrutable" during coronavirus.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Absolutely, (although not the travelling) but in the meantime and until it is safe to meet up, let's use the technology we have to keep talking, which is critical in these times of rapid change.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Let's face it, we've seen five years of digital transformation shoehorned into the last five months and there's no going back! What new office requirement?



**JAMES HARDY**

Managing director  
CCS Media

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Due to the reduction in travel I have spent more time with my family this year than at any other time. Professionally, witnessing the resilience and adaptability of the CCS team to support each other and our customers has been inspirational.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Peter Kay, Billy Connolly and Steve Coogan. I think we could all do with a light-hearted good laugh right now.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Substituting part of the time previously lost to commuting for a daily morning run or cycle followed by chocolate, biscuits, and tea throughout the remainder of the day.

#### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

It's a safe answer but all the technology leaders and organisations we work with have acted inspirationally this year. As an industry we have witnessed a real togetherness and focused action supporting organisations, sectors, and economies to survive and thrive through technological flexibility.

#### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

There are two: Zwift and Strava. How did we ever live without them?

#### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

It's impossible to answer this without a deluge of political and geopolitical opinion.

#### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes! Virtual face-to-face is great and we have proved the efficiency gains and survey obvious higher rates of adoption throughout 2020. However, it is great to get together in person at events. A future balance of in-person and virtual will be a positive thing.

#### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The channel is and always has been extremely adaptable and therefore remains increasingly relevant for customers and partners. This will continue. We will see a reduction in (previous) constant travel, more balance for our people, and greater adoption of the technology that delivers the flexibility that is promoted to customers.



All the technology organisations we work with have acted inspirationally this year. As an industry we have witnessed a real togetherness and focused action supporting organisations, sectors, and economies to survive and thrive through technological flexibility



**ROGER HARRY**

*Owner and founder  
Circle IT*

#### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

The business has done amazingly since we got rid of the last CEO who was useless as the new one is running the company properly (I was the last CEO before you start writing letters of complaint)!

Non-business wise it has to be managing to go on holiday with the family twice and getting caught by a day on each one so we had to go into self-isolation for a total of 28 days. I wasn't popular with them...

#### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Rob Brydon and Ruth Jones (*Gavin and Stacey*), and Freddie Flintoff.

#### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Training so I can eat and drink what I want, I don't think I missed a day in months even with hangovers! It was so easy to find some time to get on the road or bike or do some weights – with no travelling, I didn't know what to do with myself!

#### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

It has to be Elon [Musk] as not only is he completely nuts, he's a complete visionary and will change the world.

#### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Other than all the VC stuff, Clash of Clans as my clan are thriving in these times with more time on my hands!

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Dominic Cummings so I could travel around all I liked and make out I did it to check my eyesight. Seriously...

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Hell yes and I will literally turn up for a letter opening if I can do it face to face and there was alcohol involved (afterwards obviously).

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Its not very clear to see at the moment as it just seems to get worse and worse and the second wave is hammering the economy so the long-term effects of that are yet to be seen. I think "Flat is the new growth" sums up what businesses' expectations are and I guess being IT we are lucky as it's got more reliance now than ever so rock on!



I think "Flat is the new growth" sums up what businesses' expectations are and I guess being IT we are lucky as it's got more reliance now than ever so rock on!



**GARY HAYCOCK-WEST**

*CEO and founder  
Blue Cube Security Ltd*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

As with everyone globally COVID has posed many big questions to me in business and in my personal life. On a business level I had to ask myself what does this mean for us and our customers? How can we adapt to the changing landscape? The fact that as a team we are overcoming new challenges every day reflects something positive to come out of these times of such uncertainty.

On a personal level, I have surprised even myself by fully embracing a new fitness regime rather than bingeing. I am now half the man I used to be (OK, not



I would invite Boris Johnson and Donald Trump to a Zoom party, as to me they would be like having Waldorf and Statler from the Muppets there

quite) but I have lost four and a half stone and I am still going.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Firstly, Jeff Bezos. As the first trillionaire I would want to ask him what does he do for fun? I would also invite Boris Johnson and Donald Trump, as to me they would be like having Waldorf and Statler from the Muppets there.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Producing and drinking my own cider from apples picked from my orchard.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Mentioning him again, Jeff Bezos. Watching his growth in cloud computing and dominating business platforms this year has been outstanding.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

AirPods – thank you Apple!

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**



Naturalist Sir David Attenborough – I would love to see life on earth through his eyes.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes, being the lifetime salesman that I am, meeting people via Zoom or Teams is just not the same.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

With all face-to-face industry events and significant trade shows such as Infosec being cancelled, it has really left a mark on how the channel needs to network differently and find a balance.

There is a real buzz for meeting new people, catching up with your existing contacts and seeing new tech face to face, but COVID has made us think about how we do this long term.

Although businesses were already starting to change the way they worked by moving with the times, COVID has accelerated those changes and we are all now working more differently than ever.

Businesses have had to become more innovative in their change of needs in respect of office space and remote working, this has seen the cloud increasing at a rate never seen before.





## DARREN HEDLEY

Managing director  
Insight

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

It's a huge privilege to take on the role of UK managing director at Insight. I've started the onboarding process ahead of taking on the role in January, and can't wait for the opportunity to lead such a talented and driven team.

Although lockdown was tough, having the chance to spend quality time with my Dad was a real highlight and something that just wouldn't have happened in normal circumstances. I am grateful for that.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Firstly, George Michael. Although he's no longer with us, I'm taking a bit of creative licence with this one. Not only did he make a long-lasting contribution to music during his lifetime, but his philanthropy – most of which came to light following his passing – was remarkable. I have a huge amount of respect for those who can quietly, through simple acts of kindness and generosity, make a difference. Plus, he would have an extensive back catalogue to draw from if we run out of topics.

Next, Nicola Adams OBE. An undefeated. Olympic champion. She always gives 100 per cent and has a fantastic work ethos. I remember reading an interview around the time she secured gold in the European Games where she remarked: "I'm like a 'comeback kid' – you can't keep me down for long!" This particularly resonated with me, I'm very driven to succeed and to see Insight continue to succeed. I'll be cheering Nicola on when *Strictly Come Dancing* hits our screens!

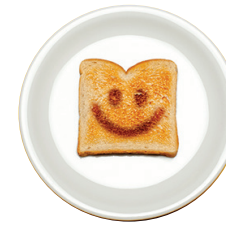
Finally, Elon Musk. Where to start. Electric cars? Space rockets? This is a man who is focused on addressing three crises facing humanity: climate, human and single-planet dependency. He's fascinating. Don't get me wrong, he's not perfect, but what a visionary. I think it would be great to pick his brains and find out what he has next up his sleeve.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Let's just say my Amazon driver is now my new best friend, thanks to his daily



My selfie toaster provided whole minutes of fun. See, I told you I don't need most of the Amazon purchases!



visits. The extent of my purchases does mean, however, that I now urgently need a clear-out.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I'm not sure I could pick just one. I have been deeply impressed with lots of individuals who have reacted quickly to support the NHS, whether through providing free equipment or diverting resources. It's great to be part of an industry that has been providing solutions to the problems we're currently facing; those who have done so should be very proud.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My selfie toaster, which provided whole

minutes of fun. See, I told you I don't need most of the Amazon purchases!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

The prime minister. It would be an extremely tough job, particularly at the moment, but I'd relish the opportunity to get to grips with all the challenges and make direct, positive change to the world.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

While the adoption of video technology has been brilliant, nothing can completely replace physical interactions. I do miss in-person work in general, although, interestingly, I probably get the chance to speak with even more people across the business now than when we were all in the office.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

It's clear that working patterns have changed and there's been a huge shift towards remote working, which is likely to continue. At Insight, we've seen no loss in productivity during lockdown – in fact, it's quite the opposite as teams have embraced the flexibility remote working can bring.

As an industry, the ability to be agile and react to fast changes in customers will be key to success. As business resiliency becomes a key priority, the channel will need to step up and provide ever-greater knowledge and thought leadership, driving the technological change customers need to navigate a path through disruption in this new world.



## JOE HEMANI

Chief executive  
Westcoast



My personal highlight of 2020 was that I got my golf handicap down to 17

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

I got my golf handicap down to 17.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

George Bernard Shaw, Beethoven, Desperate Dan from *The Dandy*.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Red wine.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Bill Gates, philanthropist.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

The internet in general.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I prefer me!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Hybrid workplaces.



## JOEY HEMINGBROUGH

Sales director  
SICL



Gordon Ramsay's swearing and candour rival my own

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Given the pandemic, I think there are too many to list. There are so many people and businesses from the industry who have been inspirational during these unprecedented times, from their work with key workers to how they have supported their staff and other businesses.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My iPhone, always.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

My daughter so I could enjoy childhood again when life was simpler.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think it will have a positive effect in relation to how the channel operates with more focus on work-life balance due to remote working.



## CARL HENRIKSEN

Chief executive  
OryxAlign

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Being in lockdown with my wonderful family. It sounds bizarre that lockdown was a personal highlight, but after the first week of recalibration, I found myself loving and cherishing the time I had with my family.

I have three kids, all under 10, and a sparkly soulmate wife, which means there is never a dull moment spent in their company.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Sir David Attenborough, Winston Churchill, Lady Gaga. What a combo!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Whisky (single malt obviously), but I'm not feeling very guilty about that; unlike being coaxed into watching some trashy TV (*Glow Up!*) and getting seriously immersed in playing Monopoly with the family.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I think Elon Musk is worth a mention here. He is arguably one of the most successful technological entrepreneurs and innovators of our time. His recent achievements with SpaceX are commendable and his ongoing commitments to our planet, sustainability and renewable energy initiatives are inspiring.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My webcam! Which I'm sure is the same for most. It's been my much-needed people window on a locked-down world.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I wouldn't want to be anyone else. I'd want to be the very best version of myself and then do what I'm passionate about – delivering an exceptional service and making a lasting and positive impact on all those around me.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Of course I do. Humans are social animals and we naturally seek face-to-

face interactions as essential to our well-being. My wonderful team at OryxAlign have redefined the term "social animal" and we all immensely look forward to reconnecting physically.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

While COVID has been extremely cruel to society and the economy, it has been an accelerator for digital transformation. Organisations that had not yet started on their digital journey have come to the stark realisation that investing in agile, secure and flexible technology platforms is now essential for survival.

This has presented the channel with even more opportunity as organisations invest more into cloud, cyber, collaboration and good old-fashioned end-user compute. Now more than ever we need accelerated innovation in the channel so hopefully positive outcomes lie ahead as a result of COVID.



I found myself loving and cherishing the time I had with my family. I have three kids, all under 10, and a sparkly soulmate wife, which means there is never a dull moment spent in their company



## JENNY HICKS

Group head of technology  
Midwich Group plc

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

I have been lucky enough to have an exciting project throughout, designing our new technology experience centre at Innovation House in Bracknell. The 4,500 sq ft provides nine application-themed zones, over 150 Midwich Group sold products, a home cinema room, film studio, control room and multiple examples of education, meeting space and workplace technologies.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

James Corden, Tristan Harris, Charlotte Dujardin.



**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

The TikTok app.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Tristan Harris – to promote his work and fears via the Netflix show and bring awareness to the infinite possibilities both good and bad.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Krisp.ai – offers noise cancellation of background disturbances for video calls.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Jessica Meir (astronaut on the first all-female spacewalk) – I would collect a handful of the surface from the moon (moon dust) to bring back for my son.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Ye, particularly conferences. The learning experiences at virtual events cannot compare to the immersive experience of a great in-person conference.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

COVID has accelerated user adoption of workplace technologies, video communication, data collection and analysis activity based (including remote) working. Channel providers will find interest in the latest solutions will increase and that the user is far better informed about their requirements.



**SIMONE HINDMARCH**

*Co-founder and managing director Commercial*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

The ability to learn and evolve as a business, which has helped us thrive through the pandemic.

Our customers needed us to support them in different ways, so as a result we completely changed our business model to enable us to react to what was required. This included supplying PPE and supporting people with homeworking as they all came to terms with lockdown and the new normal.

We took on new customers and provided new products. Our team learned new skills, especially in the safe supply and delivery of compliant PPE. We even flew in two planes full of PPE in from China.

This agile way of working, coupled with other business-critical decisions means we are in the strongest financial position ever and aligned as a group to support our customers with very different needs.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Sir David Attenborough, Elon Musk and Freddie Mercury. All three have inspired me in different ways, and all three are completely unique. They all have a massive passion for what they do, yet are able to make it relatable.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Wine. Lashings of wine!

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Bill Gates is someone who took a lot of

fierce criticism when he prophesied a global pandemic and the effects that it would have on our lives. When it occurred, he remained dignified and continues to try to help the world recover from the pandemic and that is incredibly inspiring.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Microsoft Teams. I didn't use conference-calling facilities before lockdown but it's been a lifeline to our business. Anyone who is running a business would have been lost without it.

We have all committed to a leadership meeting via videoconference every day and it has brought our team closer together. Importantly, it has been fundamental to us being able to evolve at breakneck speed.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

God, that's a tough one... I'll probably say God, actually! There are many things I would love to do, but the first thing I would do is eradicate the coronavirus and make humans realise that we caused this and have the ability to put it right.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes, sometimes there is no substitute for a face-to-face meeting or event.

Videoconferencing has a place and moving forward we won't spend as much time in cars unnecessarily travelling to meetings when a video call will do.

But there will always be place for a

one-on-one, a small meeting or a large gathering. Being together creates an energy and communication that you just can't replicate.

Lockdown has taught us to be more selective in how we interact, which is a really good thing. The pandemic has made us think outside the box and to try other ways of connecting. It has, in the main, been incredibly positive.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think technology has been the biggest winner to come out of the pandemic. People realise the vital role that tech plays to run an organisation efficiently. They realise the importance of security and of being equipped and able to work in an agile way from any location.

Technology has the answers to give us all a better quality of life, if it is used correctly. That is a lesson we are learning and it will stand us in good stead when we come out the other side of the pandemic.



There are many things I would love to do, but the first thing is eradicate the coronavirus and make humans realise that we caused this and have the ability to put it right



## GUY HOCKING

Group managing director  
Utilize plc

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

This may sound a little clichéd but seeing the way that our team here at Utilize and Ignite have pulled together and grown stronger in the face of adversity. You really get to know people during times like these. I am genuinely proud of what we are achieving during this pandemic and I am seriously excited for 2021 and beyond.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Tiesto for the old skool tunes reminding us of better times, Ricky Gervais for the dancing and laughs and Sir Ranulph

Fiennes because when we are all partied out, listening to his endless inspiring stories will have us pumped for new opportunities in 2021.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Many people worried about running out of toilet roll during lockdown, but I was more worried about running out of Wine Gums. Thankfully that dark day never arrived.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

It's easy to sing loudly from the rooftops when things are going well. But when things aren't quite as rosy, that's the time when real leaders step up and take positive action. So many big names have gone MIA during this pandemic.

But as the tech giants (and social networks) continue to grow and build influence, it's the work New York University's Meredith Whittaker continues to do behind the scenes that ensures AI is used responsibly and ensures the tech industry is held accountable. For me this is where we need increasing focus and expertise.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Since reading the book *Why We Sleep* by Matthew Walker, I have become a little obsessed with SleepWatch. It's a sleep-tracking app that gives you a sleep score each night depending on how well you have slept – based on heart rate, heart rate dip, sleep disruption, sleep quality

etc. It's surprisingly addictive (especially if you are competitive like me). My highest overall score is 942 (just saying).

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

SpongeBob. I'd enjoy a dose of his endless optimism and seafood is also my favourite thing to eat, so I would be living mainly on a diet of crab. Besides, who doesn't want to know what it's like to live in a pineapple?

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Even if these events can be easily replicated virtually, I do miss the human interaction that face-to-face events bring, and I miss the networking opportunities they create.

We have done some of our best business at events and conferences (generally at the bar!) and I still think there will be a desire for that to return in some form. There are certain things Teams and Zoom simply cannot replicate.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think the enormous, global gatherings we have seen for years will become a thing of the past (such as Microsoft Inspire/Ready etc.) and we will see smaller, more considered, regional events take their place.

How we harness the opportunities and overcome the challenges of long-term homeworking, isolated from our colleagues, will also define us in the coming months.



## CLAIRE HOPKINS

Founding director  
Ideal

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

On a personal level, I loved having all our children in one place during lockdown. It was an unexpected gift.

With the business, seeing the team win a lot of new cloud business and our continued success in deploying enterprise networks for some of London's biggest construction projects, especially when you consider the challenges working on site this year.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Phoebe Waller-Bridge for her honest, brutal sense of humour and analysis of

the issues that really matter.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, US politician and activist who has a badge that says "Well-behaved women seldom make history". She has raised the profile of women's rights and climate change in such a persuasive and eloquent way I'd love to hang out with her.

Margaret Atwood, simply a legend I would love to meet. A brilliant feminist prophet whose dystopian writing imagined societies riddled with misogyny, oppression and environmental chaos.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I'm lucky enough to live near the sea and a daily swim kept me sane even when strictly speaking it wasn't allowed. I've also loved not having to brush my hair and get dressed every day.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I have loved reading about the robot Pepper who can learn people's interests and have simple conversations. Pepper has been deployed in care homes and an international trial has found that chatting with Pepper boosted mental health and reduced loneliness in residents. If Pepper isn't the figurehead then I'd choose Masayoshi Son for his investment in this brilliant, life-changing technology.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

IGTV for drip-feeding me yoga throughout.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Having taken part in the Ration Challenge in 2020, eating the rations of a Syrian refugee for a week, I would be the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and would work with the UK government to resettle more refugees in the UK, offering the opportunity to rebuild their lives with dignity, enriching our society with their skills and stories.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

On balance I would say no, as trade events take up time that can be better spent elsewhere. But I have missed our own company events. It's difficult to properly hang out over video and chat and it's been hard for me to get to know new people who have joined the team this year.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

It has affected us all in so many ways it's hard to pick out just one or two. It's highlighted that companies, like Ideal, that have developed strong relationships over time are performing better than those that took a more transactional/reseller approach.

When lockdown started, we immediately took the attitude of how can we help our customers? Everything flowed from that. I also think that the trend to solutions-as-a-service has accelerated even faster than we expected, and the ramifications of that for the channel will be really interesting.



## MARY HUNTER

Chief people officer  
Columbus Global

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Spending so much time at home with my children and husband and learning to play and love the game of tennis.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Satya Nadella, Meghan Markle and Tony Robbins.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

It's not a guilty one, but for sure my greatest pleasure was my two young children (aged eight and 11) cooking and serving me and my husband a



three-course dinner and drinks for our wedding anniversary. All done as if we were out in a bar and restaurant. They even did the washing up!

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Business – LinkedIn to stay connected to people. Personal – the Duolingo App. I decided to learn Spanish and I've achieved a 200-day strike so far.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Tony Robbins on stage at Date with Destiny changing the lives of thousands of people for a better tomorrow for them and the world. If I can influence more people to have a positive, loving mindset in the world, then I will have created a global army of change agents who can help make a difference.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes. A few months off was a novelty and we can have less ongoing face to face for sure, but I miss the social side and the connection to people.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

There will be a significant shift to remote working and fewer face-to-face events. Firms will have to embrace social media more to attract and help them in their sales process. Video “always on” calls are here to stay and I think a lot of people will get to know more about the personal side of the people they interact with.



**DONAVAN HUTCHINSON**

*Managing director UK and Europe  
Paragon Micro UK Ltd*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

I would have to say launching a new international arm for another US business during a pandemic has been a highlight for sure!

Despite the market and worldly challenges faced, we have been able to create and grow the business very quickly to help support our existing global clients' needs while also expanding into another market (Canada) too.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

It would have to be Emma Watson,



**“Salted caramel anything” was my guiltiest lockdown pleasure**

Lady Gaga and Meg Whitman. All three have different attributes to one another but all have become powerful female figureheads for one reason or another and would be great to have a Zoom party with them.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

There have been far too many! With the gyms closed I would say “salted caramel anything” along with the extra benefit of not being suited and booted every day.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Elon Musk. His continued accomplishments and tenacity to push the boundaries are always great to watch. His viewpoints – while on a different spectrum to that of a Bill Gates for example and extreme in thought – are soon becoming reality as he embraces technology as a key driver across his businesses.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

My phone, a decent Bluetooth headset and a good connection have become even more of a necessity than before.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I don't think I'd like to be anyone else. I'm happy just being me. As I've said before my life is like a cross between a Mr Bean or a Charlie Chaplin silent film at times with many comedy factors, ups and downs. I wouldn't change it for the world.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I genuinely do. Face-to-face interaction and the ability to have impromptu meetings to strengthen relationships – both at the event and in a more relaxed setting – is very important when doing business and building a brand.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Technology has become more important than ever in the workplace due to COVID. I believe the channel will continue to embrace the new world of remote working even when the pandemic ends. Productivity in most areas has increased due to the flexibility that has been enforced upon employers and employees due to the global pandemic.

I foresee that the channel will become very focused on identifying new technologies and solutions due to the demand of the modern remote working and will start to see an increase in digital transformation-type activities from customers who will need to adapt.

The need for a solid support network is more prominent than ever and execution and customer service levels will become more important to retain and also attract new talent and customers.

# GLOBAL CHANNEL SERVICES



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**J**

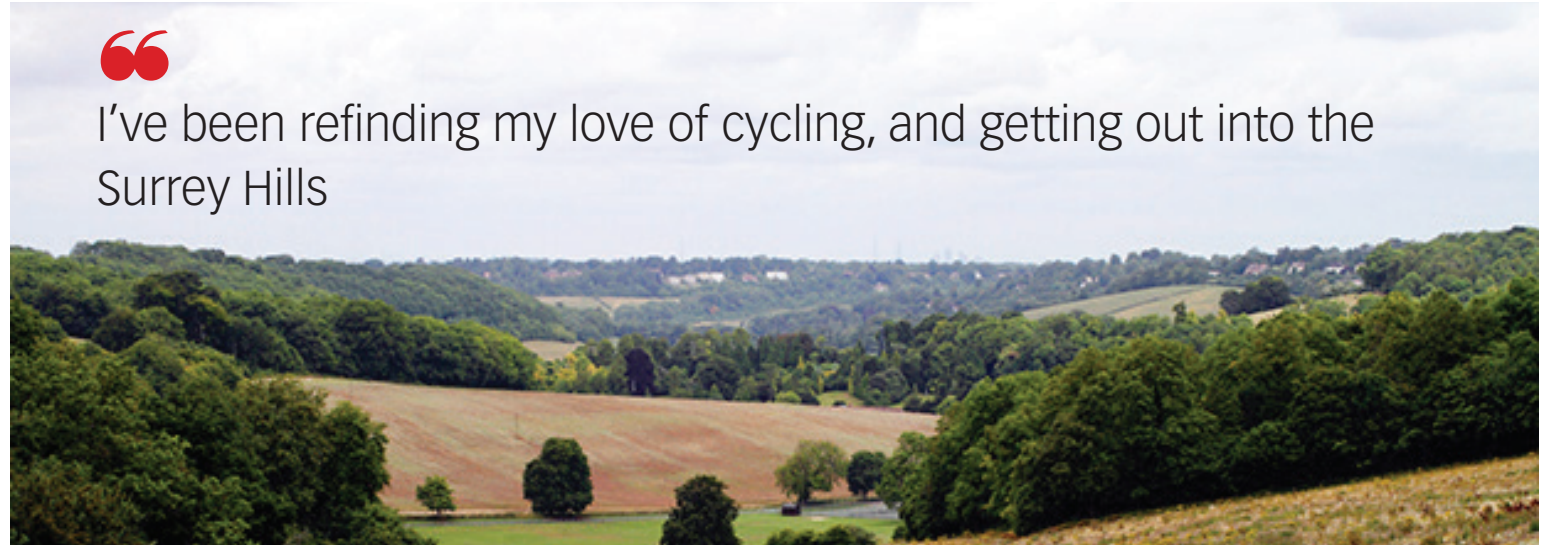
- **Mark Johnson**
- **Graham Jones**





**MARK JOHNSON**

*Strategic alliances  
NTT Ltd*



I've been refinding my love of cycling, and getting out into the Surrey Hills

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Joining the UK&I team at NTT Ltd. It's fantastic to have the opportunity to join an organisation I admired as one of my channel partners.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Heston Blumenthal for the food experience, Freddie Flintoff for the stories and Kylie Minogue for the music.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Rebalancing the home/work life despite the intensity of Webex video calls, and refinding my love of cycling, being able to get out into the Surrey Hills.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

There have been too many true signs of leadership from tech leaders to call anyone out specifically. There have been so many great programmes where companies put their people first during COVID, from flexible working/home-schooling to additional days off and mental health programmes. Overall, I think the tech industry has done a good job of looking after its people.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Strava for personal use but the humble laptop for work.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Our family dog Coco. She is always happy to see people, eats and sleeps well.

I would love to know what goes through her mind and how she is permanently happy.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes, the necessity of face-to-face interaction has never been stronger in building relationships and teaming with customers and partners.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I believe customer and partner engagement has fundamentally changed, and hopefully the interaction has become more personal despite the physical barriers. The need to help customers transform their businesses has never been greater and the necessity of trusted relationships to do this will become greater. I also hope less time traveling to meetings that can be done remotely will bring more balance to our industry.



## GRAHAM JONES

UK managing director  
Exclusive Networks UK

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Becoming a grandfather. Despite all the gloom and Zoom, worries about work/targets and so on, what a fabulous way to see what is really important – new life and family.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Trump, Piers Morgan and Boris. What a hoot that would be! The subjects would be honesty and how to help people...

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Golf lessons. As soon as the ban was lifted, and as I have a course with a great pro a mile behind my house, I was out there weekly for my 30 minutes. It was more than a lesson, more like therapy and being able to chat to a human about stuff other than work. And it's working!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I can't say any one of the usual suspects has risen to the top when it comes to helping out the world during and after the crisis. I think Bill Gates probably leads the way in both speaking smart common sense, and actually doing things about practically helping.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

It depends whether it's for work or personal use. Work unfortunately is my 'Big Mac' at home. The larger screen



Golf lessons have been my guiltiest lockdown pleasure. As soon as the ban was lifted, I was out there weekly for my 30 minutes. It was more than a lesson, more like therapy and being able to chat to a human about stuff other than work. And it's working!



means more people fit in the Zoom window. For personal use, Amazon Prime. I've been working through all 196 episodes and more of *The X-Files* from the start.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Someone like Jeff Bezos, laterally trying to see how I could spend all my money in a week in the best way to help humanity – that would be fun.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Boy, yes. Distribution is primarily about people, trust, relationships etc. We need to see people, share stories, do things with them to maintain that relationship.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

It has made us think hard about how we operate at all levels. We are now more flexible about the way our team works, and we trust them all to get on with it, even when they're not physically in the office. Also working out when to meet and when to use video will be the ongoing change.



# K

• **James Kight**

• **Andrew King**

• **Kelvin Kirby**





## JAMES KIGHT

Chief executive  
Printerland

“  
I don't miss face-to-face events. They're a waste of time. I've never been to a productive meeting

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Watching every episode of *Coronation Street* since 1960 on catch-up.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

George Best, Vera Duckworth and Liam Gallagher.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Not setting my alarm for the morning.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

None of them. Don't worry about what others are doing, concentrate on your own business.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Google Analytics. It's been amazing seeing how resilient we've been under such crazy circumstances.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Boris Johnson. It would be a great insight into what real working pressure is about.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

No, They are a waste of time. I've never been to a productive meeting.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think over time it will return to normal, and that includes meetings!



## ANDREW KING

Chief executive  
Grey Matter, Cloud Know How

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

How our 120-plus staff rose to the challenge of remote working in March, and how as a company we furloughed no-one, paid our VAT, and helped our customers reduce their cloud spend.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Jeff Lynne of my favourite band ELO, Stephen Fry as he makes me laugh and he likes history, Bill Gates – his Gates Notes show he is not just a software geek.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Eating too much homemade Stracciatella ice cream.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Bill Gates with his Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation – “All lives have equal value.”

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Microsoft Teams.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'm quite happy as myself.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes, I miss networking and meeting new people.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

The importance of staff wellbeing – it's not all about work.

“  
We furloughed no-one, paid our VAT, and helped our customers reduce their cloud spend



## KELVIN KIRBY

Chief executive  
Technical Associates Limited

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

In a year that has been unusual, managing to get a holiday to Cape Verde in just before lockdown. We left before there was any hint of restrictions and arrived back a few days before the full lockdown came into force, so we were lucky to have squeaked through.

From the business side we have continued to grow, even though some customers put off projects until recently, but cloud services has been a fortunate area to be in as a result of COVID, and although we have been delivering services remotely for the last 15 years, it seems as though everyone now realises

that it actually can be done effectively this way.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Emilia Clarke or Kit Harrington – but only because I have SO many unanswered questions about *Game of Thrones!*

Elon Musk – because getting an insight into the way he thinks and the future of technology from his perspective would be fascinating.

Graham Norton – because he has the gossip on so many other celebrities and he would keep the party going!

Of course the question should have been which three characters would you invite – in which case it would be Spock, Daenerys Targaryen and Holly Golightly.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Binge-watching *Line of Duty* as I didn't get to see it first time around. I still watch re-runs of *Star Trek* though! I like Captain Kirk's leadership style – there's a lot to be learned from those old episodes. There are lots of other series I still would like to watch but I just haven't had the time.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

It's a bit clichéd I guess but Elon Musk has managed to increase his net worth by 30 per cent during lockdown AND launched a raft of impressive new technologies and products.

Love him or hate him you can't deny that he is a prolific inventor, visionary and very clever guy.



“

I still watch re-runs of *Star Trek*. I like Captain Kirk's leadership style – there's a lot to be learned from those old episodes

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My laptop for sure. It's my world for about 18 hours a day (often more). I'm not sure what I would do with my time without it. My backup is my phone of course.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Oh that's an interesting one. Why would I want to be anyone else though? I quite like who I am!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes of course. I miss the social interaction, especially at conferences, which have all converted to virtual events this year. I think it may be a while before we can get back to in-person conferences, but I think people will be so much more enthused and actively involved when they do return. I look forward to that.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Of course there will be much more focus on remote delivery. And working from home has proved to be a huge success. That in turn means more fragmentation of where on-site services may be delivered (from office to homes instead). Companies will downsize and as a result will convert on-prem hardware into cloud services.

We're going to see the rise of more virtual companies, with no formal office space as such, and all staff working from home. This will have significant implications for social change and the way we interact with others. In my company we have had many challenges in recent years trying to organise meetings or events that all staff could attend at one place and time. So it has morphed into localised groups of staff meeting socially (and now remotely). I suspect this will be our new world for a while – at least until we can all get vaccinated anyway.



# L

- **Jonathan Lassman**
- **Paul Lloyd**
- **Richard Lockey**
- **Alex Louth**
- **Martin Lulham**
- **Shaun Lynn**





**JONATHAN LASSMAN**

*Managing director  
Epaton Ltd*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

The camaraderie of everyone, both in business and within the community; the sense that we are all in this together.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

This is a big question and it will obviously depend on the mood you are in at the time. Right now I want a singalong, so.... Jay Kay (from Jamiraquai), Stevie Wonder (no explanation needed) and Ben Volpeliere-Pierrot (from Curiosity Killed the Cat). I think that blend would be superb.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Online poker and still playing three times a week.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Dheeraj Pandey, the current CEO of Nutanix. He has developed the right product at the right time and with the right company ethos. He has also realised that through lockdown the most important things in life are family and he decided to step down (not immediately) to spend more time with his.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Zoom. Playing poker without it would not have been as much fun.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Sadiq Khan. I would turn London back into the city it should be.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

100 per cent yes. We have had four major events for us cancelled this year. NOT HAPPY!

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Short term there are big changes in the way people work. Long term we will return to pre-COVID normal. People will realise that without offices the next generation of worker will never be a possibility.



**PAUL LLOYD**

*Owner  
Sellerly Limited*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

I won a major new client in February, then worked with them throughout lockdown, and together we achieved three consecutive record-breaking months. And the high spot for the last two years has been a grandchild a year! A third is on the way but could either be a 2020 pandemic baby or 2021 baby, it's up to them.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Having spent so much time locked down with minimal opportunity to meet and

talk to anyone. I think I would like a random selection of three and see what comes out of it.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Malbec, Chianti, Barola, Ameroni, Repasso, Pol Roger, Bollinger, Digby Fine English (luxury English sparkling wine self-described as sophisticated yet racy)...there is a trend developing here!

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Mike Norris. He has been running Computacenter for 35 years. The business has kept going and growing and is still at number one. I saw him speak at a CRN event recently and his passion and drive are the same as they were when I met him 30 years ago, he's inspiring and so dedicated Sometimes wish I had joined him then.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

I have become a LinkedIn expert and use it for everything from a news resource to a tool for winning new business. Most of Sellerly's new business in the last few years has touched LinkedIn, and when I look back at the research that I used to do in my sales career, what used to take me hours I can now do in minutes with a device in my pocket.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be, and what would you do?**

This is a difficult one, as I quite like



My guiltiest lockdown pleasure? Malbec, Chianti, Barola, Ameroni, Repasso, Pol Roger, Bollinger, Digby Fine English (luxury English sparkling wine self-described as sophisticated yet racy)...a trend is developing here!

being me! Today I would like to be prime minister. I would look to clear up the mess the country is in and develop a solid communication strategy and stop all the lies and fake news. I'd start to put core values into place and lead by example so our children witness and understand decent values, how best to behave and what is acceptable and what isn't.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

This has been the most challenging part of the lockdown for me. I miss the face-to-face meetings and interactions with people and colleagues and the variety of events that haven't happened in 2020. Virtual is no substitute for me. I cannot wait to get back.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I'm not sure there will be massive changes in the longer term, as I think we will go more or less back to normal over time. Working at home cramped under the stairs or sprawled on

your bed with your cat walking over your laptop wanting attention (actually that bit is OK!) can't carry on forever.

The two significant changes for me are: 1) Buying online which will continue and grow more unless the channel can establish real added-value elements such as more personal service and involving people in the process. In sales it's a cautionary tale; if you can't add value you will eventually become extinct.

2) Video and virtual meetings will have a part to play, but I think that over time we will move predominantly back to face-to-face meetings and interactions. I think this will be different in the UK versus in the US, as we don't have the geographical challenges that they do and therefore arranging a meeting in another city the next day is a lot easier in the UK. It only takes "that one time" that a deal was lost due to a virtual meeting awkward interaction to then make us consider that in some cases physical presence and social engagement is a fundamental part of building trust in the sales relationship.



**RICHARD LOCKEY**

*Country manager  
Crayon UK*

BBQs for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Hooray for the Great British weather!

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

For a tech figurehead, probably Jack Dorsey for trying to manage the new era of free speech. However, I think the most inspirational figurehead of 2020 is Jacinda Ardern.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

From a business standpoint, Teams. It made things easier than they otherwise would have been – but from a personal perspective, Netflix and Spotify.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Rory McIlroy, play in the Ryder Cup and beat the USA at the K Club in Ireland.

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

I'm not sure I have a highlight of 2020 yet. It's been a very strange year – I would have to say my family, friends and colleagues all being well...my kids managing to survive home schooling, and Crayon continuing to grow.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Oh, the dreaded Zoom parties! I'd go for Roy Keane, Alan Shearer and Patrick Viera – then I'd sit back and enjoy!

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Absolutely, I miss the networking side of things, the social side – I guess I had better get used to it.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I'm not sure there is a huge difference. There's the obvious working practices, more video calls, fewer face-to-face meeting/events etc, but I think that's the way it was going anyway. The biggest legacy will be on people in the channel having to step up knowledge-wise, become experts in their field and not rely on the one 'expert' in their organisation.





**ALEX LOUTH**

Managing director  
Logicalis

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Over the last 20-plus years from Monday to Friday and sometimes at the weekend I've worked either away from home or in London. Since March this year I have had more family dinners than in the rest of my life put together. The lockdown provided very little good but what it did provide my family enjoyed!

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Sylvester Stallone – what a life! Rocky/Rambo/Demolition Man. I started to follow him on Instagram and have realised what an awesome chap he is.

Sir David Attenborough – how interesting would he be? Think about everything he has seen and experienced! His work on the environment and the impact of what we are doing to the planet

is massive and something we need to listen and act on.

The Queen – I've just started watching *The Crown* and would love to think she had similar views that she might share over a Zoom chat!

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I've tried to lose weight over lockdown. I found a recipe for a Keto Popsicle – a no-diary lollypop. I now have one a day!

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Elon Musk – still a crazy genius.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

The BBC app. I've always had it installed but being home based and not

purchasing my daily newspaper, I've found myself using the app. I love the Long Reads.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Normally I would say the UK prime minister, but that is a thankless job right now. Whether you agree with the government or not at the moment, it is a tough job that has to balance 101 things.

I would be Jeff Bezos. The guy is worth \$185bn (September 2020). I would use 90 per cent, leaving Jeff with a measly \$19bn when he returns after a week. There are many people who live in unbelievable poverty, I'm sure \$166bn will help!

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

One hundred per cent. I enjoy spending time with people, customers, colleagues, friends and family. Over the last 20 years social events with customers and colleagues have been a big part of my roles, now things are different, for the time being anyway. I miss them but I don't miss the hangovers!

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Loads of things but the top for me are: 1) Accelerated digital transformation. There are some companies catching up and others reaping the rewards for their technical adoption. It is now a necessity. We cannot live without with security wed through it. 2) Flexibility on planning, flexibility on budgets to plan for the unforeseen. Flexibility on company policies such as remote working.



I'd invite the Queen to my Zoom party. I've just started watching *The Crown* and would love to think she had similar views that she might share!







**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Finally getting my pilot's licence and flying to visit far-away clients.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Paddy McGuinness, Jürgen Klopp, John Bishop.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Contributing to the consumption of old-world French wine!

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Dheeraj Pandey for keeping Nutanix on



I'd be Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and cause chaos at the club!

top of the HCI perch and confidently disrupting other established vendor solutions.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Uber Eats and the 'ten-minute takeaway'.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. I'd spend the week causing chaos at the club!

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

One hundred per cent! Most of our team are back in the office and enjoying the much-missed banter. I can't see virtual events catching on either. It will be interesting to see where it all leads, as we do love an international vendor conference in the channel!

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I think the big change will be the way that the channel markets itself. Vendors and distributors will have been forced to discover new ways to get products to market which will no doubt be a fixture for some time to come.



**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Being proud to see Agiliteam deliver continued growth across the business during the most challenging period in our history. Experiencing 50-plus per cent revenue and profit growth, 40 per cent headcount increase and 200 per cent expansion of our Logistics Hub.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Robert Green, Simon Sinek and Malcolm Gladwell to discuss WHY... I am David!

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Less travel and my own bed!

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma for his donations to charity.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

iFollow – watching my beloved Reading FC, who were top of the league at the time of writing these answers!

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

George Best. I would spend the time seeing the world through his eyes.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Sorry, you are on mute!

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

COVID has accelerated digital-enabled supply chains, streamlining how we transact services through automation.



I was proud to see Agiliteam deliver continued growth across the business during the most challenging period in our history, experiencing 50-plus per cent revenue and profit growth

# M

- **Rob May**
- **Jay McBain**
- **Todd McQuilkin**
- **Robin Meehan**
- **Sam Mudd**
- **Neil Murphy**



## ROB MAY

Managing director  
Ramsac Limited

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Satya Nadella continually inspires me. His vision, leadership and good nature are excellent while the progression in technology, innovation and digital transformation tools helps the entire industry.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My coffee machine followed by Teams/Zoom.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd be my wife. I know I don't appreciate her fully or comprehend everything that she does and I think understanding her world would be an education!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I do. While there are huge time savings in not commuting, you cannot replicate the energy or connection which is created when you meet in person.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think collaboration and industry events will be forever changed. Meetings with suppliers and partners are more focused, more frequent and more effective now and that will continue.



### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Growing throughout lockdown. We recruited, interviewed, and on-boarded seven new staff during the period.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Tim Vine, Kylie Minogue and James Corden.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I have consumed more coffee and chocolate during lockdown than the average small village.



## JAY MCBAIN

Principal analyst – channels,  
partnerships and ecosystems  
Forrester

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

2020 has been a year like no other. I was proud of the entire channel – from partners to vendors and distributors – how they rose to the occasion in March to help customers build a new remote topology from scratch. From hardware to software, and the multitude of services to make it all work, combining very late nights and early mornings to deliver uninterrupted business to customers.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

I'm going to choose dead celebrities to

mix this up. Robin Williams, John Candy and Chris Farley would make one of the most entertaining Zoom parties ever.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I haven't been able to play hockey a few times a week so I have escaped the house to cycle 50-plus miles on the weekend. Great time to think and reflect.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I continue to be impressed with Satya Nadella. Quietly building a \$1.6tn juggernaut while keeping the partner-first culture and DNA. Outgrowing major players in the IaaS, SaaS, security, UCaaS, and productivity spaces and not getting involved in the crisis/politics of the week while keeping customers as the North Star can be a lesson for other large tech CEOs.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

After 17 years at IBM and Lenovo I started to dabble with Apple. Over time, I have moved into full fanboy mode and own at least one of everything they sell. The way my entire life is managed from health, sleep, financial, music, shopping, pictures, work, and social as I move from device to device is magical.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

A superpower I would love to have is to be invisible. I'd love to be that proverbial



fly on the wall in the back rooms of business, politics, and other parts of life for a week. It would be fascinating and scary at the same time.

#### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I do, but I also have a new appreciation for meetings that can be done via Zoom versus travel. The first reflex of booking a plane ticket will be forever altered and people's comfort level with more real-time, integrated communication and collaboration will complement face-to-face relationships in the future.

#### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Customers' move to automation, accelerating cloud investments, new remote topologies creating new risk, security, and continuity approaches, the growth of e-commerce/marketplaces, and customer/employee experience will create enough mystery to drive margins for the next decade for the channel. The opportunities measure in the trillions of dollars for this industry.



I have moved into full Apple fanboy mode and own at least one of everything they sell



### **TODD MCQUILKIN**

*Non-executive director; board member  
Air IT*

#### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Without doubt selling my majority shareholding and having August Equity as our outward investment partner to carry forward our dream of creating a national brand for IT and communications services.

#### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Ritchie McCaw (sport).  
Eddie Murphy (actor).  
will.i.am (music).

#### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**



## Revisit your strategy and realign your expectations before you embark on the journey towards private equity

Having complete downtime – I always felt guilty about not working but after a few months it felt great!

#### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

My managing director, James Healey, now our COO. Throughout the sale process James was nothing but outstanding. All the reports we had back from external DD were exemplary and both teams were complementary about how he had performed.

I personally went through a difficult time. James took the lead and smashed it! Without him I am convinced we would not have got the deal across the line. I owe a huge amount of gratitude to him.

#### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

It must be the Amazon app.

#### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

The president of the USA. On behalf of the Republican Party I would like to have taken Trump's place in the debate – he was so bad, even I could have done a better job!

#### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes, I certainly do – you cannot beat face-to-face interaction.

#### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I believe it will have a huge impact throughout our industry. In MSP world, how we operate has certainly already changed. Servicing the client base, the sales process and how we adapt to generate new sales through digital and social mediums will all need to evolve if MSPs are to survive.

The ability to adapt to change quickly will be critical – this is digital transformation now being forced upon us. In our industry we have been speaking about it for years, and some have listened and transformed, others haven't! I believe the businesses that transformed early will come out stronger from this pandemic. The businesses that were slow to embrace digital transformation may get through, but it will be a struggle.

Finally, if we do have exit strategies in place which may involve buying and selling organically or through PE, then this will be impacted. Revisit your strategy and realign your expectations before you embark on the journey.



**ROBIN MEEHAN**

Chief technology officer  
Inawisdom

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Everyone I know being healthy(ish) through the pandemic so far – both family and colleagues. It has also been humbling to talk to my work friends where this has not been the case – a cliché I know, but it really brings home what is important. We're a close-knit company and this is beyond important for us, so I am proud of how we've handled it both healthwise and commercially to date, while acknowledging that the world is not out of the woods yet...

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Assuming we can raise the dead, please invite Jimi Hendrix, Django Reinhardt and Eddie Van Halen. Three generations of masters. I'm not sure they would get on though.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Not commuting, or Netflix – one of those.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I guess my usual answer here would be Werner Vogels, CTO of Amazon. I normally get my fix in Las Vegas every year at AWS re:invent where he always offers innovation and originality, but sadly it won't be in person this year.

I think the most inspiring person in my everyday environment is probably my colleague Phil Basford – he leads our Solution Engineering practice and is also



Exercise gives you a fighting chance of remaining sane during lockdown, and my Fitbit gamifies it enough to keep me motivated

an AWS Ambassador – the sheer energy and enthusiasm he shows in and outside work for his discipline is inspiring to watch and as I've found out through team video calls during lockdown, he does it all from his daughter's pink bedroom!

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My Fitbit – exercise gives you a fighting chance of remaining sane during lockdown, and it gamifies it enough to keep me motivated. In the summer anyway, we will see as winter progresses.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd be a beach bum and go windsurfing every day; getting up late and then moaning about the wind not being good enough but going out on the water anyway. It's a luxury.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely – I've been through the "how did I ever cope with travelling to work/meetings?" phase – the old world can

seem so inefficient in the "new normal". As we've gradually returned to the office (between wave one and two) I had a collaborative (socially distanced) workshop with my colleagues where we discussed and co-edited a document – in a room, talking, with no collaboration software involved. It was amazingly productive in a way online collaboration just sometimes isn't and it shocked me – I came out thinking "face-to-face is the future!"

Obviously remote working is now the norm and has some amazing upsides – so as with most things, it's all about balance.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

By breaking the myth/expectation that a face-to-face meeting is always required as a first step; this has accelerated the early parts of the engagement cycle. As a Premier Partner of AWS, we get involved in a multitude of opportunities so being reactive and agile was always a necessity, but now it's driven an even more flexible approach to responding to requests and requirements which is efficient and means things happen at an exhilarating pace. Obviously we also adapted our marketing activities to be entirely digital, whereas previously they were maybe only 70 per cent digital.

With AWS as our primary channel partner I don't think much else has changed for us – we have always worked collaboratively and across regions and teams but for rather more traditional channel players there is probably more of a challenge ahead.



## SAM MUDD

Managing director  
Phoenix Software

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

In among the challenges of 2020, it was wonderful to see my son getting to go to sea as a maritime cadet. His dream is to become an Officer of the Watch, and then maybe I will get to be a charter guest on the reality TV series *Below Deck!*

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Kylie Minogue, Robbie Williams, Lionel Richie – they should get the party going.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Watching all the episodes of *Below Deck*.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Without doubt it is still Bill Gates and his humanitarian efforts, along with his wife Melinda. His focus on science, facts and what will have an impact on the world is as precise as his foresight was when he developed the first Microsoft OS.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Like so many others, I have been living in virtual meetings and calls using Microsoft Teams. While it sometimes feels like one call after another, as a people person it's great to maintain contact with friends, family and colleagues.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I would love to do something out of IT for the novelty factor. Perhaps be a successful sports star – Serena Williams at Wimbledon in Singles Final week would be good. Followed by a big Pimm's!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes. I love people, the interaction and having fun. It's that simple.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Longer term I feel that we will be braced to deal with whatever global events throw at us – pandemic, economic crisis, natural disaster. The solution is often technology and people fixing it. This year we have seen that technology, more than ever, has allowed us to keep connected, keep working and accelerate change to support one another.



## NEIL MURPHY

Chief executive  
Bytes

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

One of the greatest things about 2020 was that the weather has finally been toppled from the top spot of favourite British conversation starters.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

I would invite David Icke, Katie Hopkins and Piers Morgan – I would put myself on mute, sit back and enjoy the show.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

This is a childhood-inspired online version of Knockdown Ginger where you invite random people to a Teams/Zoom call, wait till they join and then leave.



My baking has flourished over the last six months!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I really like Elon Musk. His can do/get it done attitude is incredible. To get astronauts launched into space is such an amazing and complex undertaking. You know, it's not rocket science but it is quite difficult.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

The BBC Good Food app – my baking has flourished over the last six months!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd probably be Gloria Gaynor. What would I do? Do you think I'd crumble? Do you think I'd lay down and die? Oh no. Not I. I will survive.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes! I look forward to their return. Of course at first I'll be afraid. I'll be petrified. I'll keep thinking how others could be within two metres of my side.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think it will be a long time before the cross-channel ferries start operating at levels anywhere near what we were used to before.



A large, bold, white letter 'N' is positioned on the left side of the image against a solid red background. To the right of the 'N', a white, curved, swoosh-like graphic element extends from the top towards the bottom, partially overlapping the red background and the white background of the right side of the image.

# N

- **James Napp**



## JAMES NAPP

Managing director  
Bechtle UK



I'd invite Roger, Rafa and Novak to a Zoom party – let's see how well they really get on...

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Discovering and enjoying more of my local area with the family during lockdown walks.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Roger, Rafa and Novak – let's see how well they really get on...

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

My new pancake mixing bowl!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Angela Whitty – who knew!?

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

The 5GHz channel on my WiFi router which helped to stop the kids stealing my bandwidth for Roblox!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Borat. Just imagine.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes (socially and relationship building).  
No (travel and being away from family).

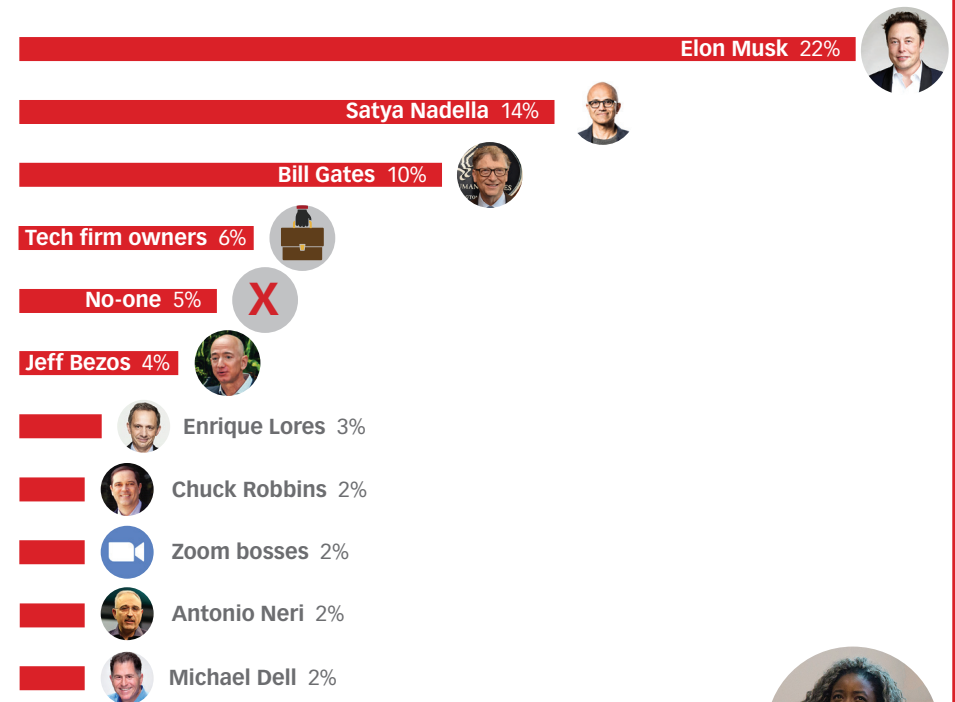
### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

People will truly value the positive social and trusted relationships they have and spend less time on those that are less fulfilling and rewarding.

## Inspiration for the nation

**Elon Musk** was clearly this year's most inspirational tech figurehead for our A-Listers, gaining **22 per cent** of votes. Though not all were fans of Musk personally, his leadership and vision impressed many. **Satya Nadella** came second with **14 per cent** for successfully steering to the firm's offerings throughout the pandemic. Some people preferred to look to the **NHS** for inspiration, and **5 per cent said no leaders** had impressed them.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year?



A big welcome to the tech figurehead list to **Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon** MBE, founder of Stemettes, a social enterprise that promotes women in STEM careers. She gained 2 per cent of the vote.



# O

- **Kieran O'Connor**
- **Julie O'Hara**
- **Apay Obang-Oyway**
- **Stefni Oliver**





## KIERAN O'CONNOR

Sales director  
Total Computer Networks

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Getting through it! It has been the most testing year ever, but I'm really proud of how all the team have risen to the challenge and done an amazing job.

### Which celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Boris, Trump and Putin. Imagine that, who would you believe?

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Growing my hair back to its full 90s curtains glory.



I grew my hair back to its full 90s curtains glory

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Same as always, Elon Musk. The brain-machine interface stuff his Neuralink business is doing is mind blowing.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Netflix, completed it.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Our MD Aidan Groom, just so I could have some downtime.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I do, but it's also clear for everyone to see that we can get by great with technology. Though I'm sure we will get back to events of some sort next year.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think customers see the value of the channel, all the work that was done in March and April to help customers get home and get working couldn't have been done without resellers pulling it all together. But the resellers that were able to do more than supply are the ones that have really demonstrated their long-term value, compared with an e-tailer.



## JULIE O'HARA

Group delivery director  
Computacenter

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

My son passing his GCSEs and being accepted on to his college course of choice.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Andrew Scott, Jürgen Klopp, Reese Witherspoon.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I took some time out to exercise and I joined some fun Zoom exercise classes.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I would have to say Bill Gates because of his philanthropic efforts and the work his foundation is doing to help with co-ordinating a worldwide response to the pandemic, despite all the detractors.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Microsoft Teams, it's been a revelation!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Georgia Hall, British female professional golfer. I would love to know what it feels like to play well and consistently...to avoid trees and rough and know how to get out of sand bunkers!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes, I do. Attending an event or conference in person, where you have to step away from the day-to-day distractions and focus on learning and collaborating with your colleagues, I believe is invaluable.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

It has shown the amount of work that you can get done working virtually. Not only does it avoid unnecessary costs such as travel and so on, it has enabled us to work quicker and much more efficiently globally. I believe it has also had a hugely positive impact on the work/life balance.



## APAY OBANG-OYWAY

Director, enterprise channel and alliances EMEA  
Broadcom

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Seeing the acceleration of digital transformation driven by people's intense desire to maintain community and connection to those in their lives through this terrible pandemic. Technology has allowed us to build the new norm, while remaining connected in some degree.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Trevor Noah – a hilarious comedian with his finger on the political pulse.

Satya Nadella – one of the people I admire the most in tech today. Drives a values-based and human-centred design to artificial intelligence.

Greta Thunberg – someone who is passionate about our future direction as a society that will affect her generation.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Binge-watching on Netflix – *Designated Survivor*, *Death in Paradise*, *Lucifer*, *Power*, Korean films to name but a few.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk – a transformational tech leader who is pushing the boundaries of thought and reality in many industries such as transport, energy and space.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

WhatsApp has been crucial in keeping me connected with family, friends, colleagues and even some retailers too.



If I could be anyone else for a week, I'd be Donald Trump and try to understand the logic behind some of his illogical actions. I'd bring some much-needed healing, then withdraw from the presidential race



### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd be Donald Trump and try to understand the logic behind some of his illogical actions. I'd bring some much-needed healing, then withdraw from the presidential race.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely; there is something about human interaction and communicating face to face that even technology cannot replace.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Strategic foresight is going to become a must for all industries, including the IT channel. Consider the importance of strategic foresight for enterprises, especially within fast-changing environments. The channel will play a more significant role in helping organisations to build robust integrated structures, processes and systems that enable them to institutionalise strategic foresight as part of their digital transformation.



## STEFNI OLIVER

Chief executive  
Daisy Corporate Services



My lockdown food now revolves around cheese and onion pie and steak, vegetable and potato pie – preferably a small slice of each in the same meal

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

My eldest starting high school successfully. She was utterly terrified about it, especially after not really leaving the house for six months or finishing primary school properly (and unfortunately also having parents who have discovered they are terrible educators)! Thankfully, she absolutely loves it and comes home bursting with excitement every day. It's so lovely to see and such a relief after many months of fears and tears leading up to it.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

I'll take a risk and go with two ageing, (but very interesting and entertaining) national treasures and hope I don't jinx anything before this article is published! Sir David Attenborough and Prince Phillip. Then for the third I would choose Keanu Reeves because by all accounts he's the loveliest and kindest person you could meet so I'd like to find out for myself, and if he's lovely but dull I'm sure Prince Phillip will let him know!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

As our head office, and therefore the office canteen hasn't been open, the owner of the canteen has been making and delivering the most delicious home-made pies to our doors every week to keep his business ticking over. My lockdown food now revolves around cheese and onion pie and steak, veg and potato pie – preferably a small slice of each in the same meal – sometimes

two or three times a day! They never get boring, take one minute to warm up in between Teams meetings and of course have been wonderful for my figure!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Having just read today's Megabyte piece on Virtual 1, Tom O'Hagan is front of mind. It's always great to see a partner of DCS doing well, but doubly so when the CEO is the founder and a genuinely lovely person (Keanu Reeves in disguise?) who you want to see succeed.

I had met many of Tom's employees before I met Tom himself and had heard nothing but great reports on how much he cares for the V1 team and how he is also a big advocate of equality and diversity – showing it through his actions rather than just saying words. Having a reputation like this precedes you, while also building and growing a business that is well thought of by partners, and very easy to do business with is so hard to achieve and seeing it has certainly been a cockle warmer for me.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Teams of course! Life without Teams this year would have been so much more difficult. I'm definitely not an early adopter generally, so personally was quite late to the 'using Teams for everything' party after we launched it for use in DCS, but that very quickly changed this March and I certainly appreciate it now and seem to live in it all day, every day when working.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

An astronaut on the ISS. Seeing Earth from space must be such an incredible experience and I'm pretty sure it will give you a huge reality check about sweating the small stuff when you're down here doing real life on the pale blue dot.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I like people's real-life faces, but I don't like the huge time suck of travel that's involved in getting anywhere when you live in remote countryside in the North, so for me it's swings and roundabouts. I like a balance of real life and virtual interactions. Events I could probably live without face to face, but fostering good relationships with customers and partners is so much better for me when we are face to face in any situation. I really miss spending time face to face with my team and the camaraderie and atmosphere of being in a busy office.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Focusing on the end user has never been so important and I don't think that new level of importance will go away soon. Changing the way we work as a nation to become homeworking-centric has led to new challenges for businesses, especially around the working environment and its enablement, security, data protection and a multitude of vulnerabilities. Without a priority focus on the end user and their entire working ecosystem we could fail to help our customers operate successfully and with adequate protection.



# P

- **John Pepper**
- **Alex Phillips**
- **Natalie Pilgrim**
- **Rob Pooley**



## JOHN PEPPER

chief executive and founder  
Managed

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Realising that I enjoy working from home. Don't get me wrong, I love being in the office surrounded by the team, but with modern tools I will probably never return to five days in the office again. We can all get so much done remotely. Prior to 18 March I spent nearly every working day away from home.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

It would have to be three amazing musicians as I have really missed live music and festivals this year.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Eating. Too much. Also learning to code. I wanted to learn a language such as Spanish or German before the age of 50. However, with travel restricted now and possibly well into the future I thought... hmm, let me learn a programming language instead. So if anybody has any very basic Python3 requirements I am your man!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Satya Nadella. Could we have been this productive during the pandemic without his vision, foresight and leadership through the past six years to build the scalable platform we all work on every day and even take for granted?

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?



I wanted to learn a language such as Spanish or German before the age of 50. However, with travel restricted now and possibly well into the future I thought... hmm, let me learn a programming language instead

Teams/Zoom etc. Plus of course my Coding for Dummies app.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

This may be corny, but right now I wouldn't want to.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Teams and Zoom meetings are a welcome stopgap, but no true substitute for face-to-face events and I do miss them.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Working from the office is now a privilege. We and our customers are adapting to that and it will have a lasting effect on the channel and our customers forever. All of that is a positive change that brings a lot of new opportunities.





## ALEX PHILLIPS

Managing director  
Northamber

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Becoming managing director of the company started by my father 40 years ago is both poignant and an honour.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Gordon Ramsay, Sir David Attenborough and Drake.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Sneaking into the office to eat pizza so my wife doesn't know!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired

### you most this year, and why?

The person who invented Zoom. Do I really need to explain why? See below!

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

I could not have survived the pandemic without videoconferencing with friends, family and colleagues. While we are all remote working, being able to interact in a virtual face-to-face mode has saved us.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Someone on a beach in a country without COVID; I would do nothing and it would be great until I get bored and check my email after about two minutes!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely. The chance to meet face to face with friends and colleagues from around the industry was good for sanity and good for business. We are a business which highly values relationships with our partners, and face-to-face events are key for this. We miss them!

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Hybrid/remote working is here to stay. The way technology is used is already changing as a result and resellers will need to adapt in order to help their customers to stay ahead of the curve.



## NATALIE PILGRIM

UK&I personal systems partner  
sale manager, commercial  
channel  
HP Inc

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020

Without a doubt the birth of my son, Arthur in April. It's the most wonderful, rewarding, entertaining and exhausting job ever.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Michelle Obama, Chrissy Teigen and Rosie Ramsey. All successful, funny, sometimes outrageous mums who I think would be really fun and interesting to hang out with. I'd also like learn some tips from them about how to juggle motherhood with a successful career.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

While I'm on maternity leave my guilty pleasure has been watching a reality show called *Below Deck*. It's funny, cringy, endearing and annoying to watch and I really enjoy it to switch off to when I get some time to sit down!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year and why ?

Aside from our own CEO Enrique Lores, Satya Nadella is an inspiring leader. I admire how he balances the continued success of the global giant with supporting the economy globally, through initiatives such as helping over 10 million job seekers globally gain new digital skills since COVID struck.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

For all the Zoom catch-ups during



lockdown, (and showing our new son to family and friends who weren't able to visit) we've really enjoyed using the Jabra 710 speaker which has fantastic sound quality for calls, and works brilliantly with our HP Dragonfly Laptop.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

So much! I used to be teased that I would always be at every single industry event going, but I absolutely love to be out meeting up with friends/colleagues/partners and experiencing new people and places and I really miss it.

**How will Covid leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The increased flexibility that remote working has brought to the channel during the pandemic has meant that people are able to better balance working and home life.

I believe one of the positives to come out of this is that parents have been able to spend more time with their families, while also carving out successful careers and maximising channel opportunities for customers.



One of the positives to come out of this is that parents have been able to spend more time with their families, while also carving out successful careers and maximising channel opportunities for customers



**ROBERT POOLEY**

*Solutions director  
Saepio Information Security*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Surviving is well up there! I certainly respect my mortality following a bleak March/April when a colleague was in a coma, my wife and I were battling to breathe and Boris was taken to ICU. A very surreal period.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Sir David Attenborough, Ricky Gervais and Donald Trump.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Darts for the frustratingly addictive pursuit of 180s.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Elon Musk for the feats of SpaceX. I've always been fascinated with the enormity space. If Neil Armstrong were alive, he would have been invited to the Zoom party! Although a controversial character at times, Musk's abundance of ambition, disruptive approach and philanthropic desires are inspirational for me.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

A lot! Spotify, Netflix, Strava, Garmin, BBC Sounds, Quartz, Oculus, Pokemon GO... but I'll go with Headspace. Great for mindfulness in a challenging year.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

My three-year-old daughter April. I'd hang out with her buddies Jack, Ruby and Leon, enjoy food on demand, play all day, lap up cuddles from mum, care about very little and sleep 11 hours a night!

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes and no. I miss the injection of knowledge from a good event and enjoying a beer with counterparts in the industry. I don't miss the hangovers!

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

We'll travel for fewer meetings and will enjoy the benefits of hybrid home and office working. Get the balance right and it benefits the environment, individual wellbeing and productivity.

# Q

- **Rob Quickenden**



## ROB QUICKENDEN

Chief strategy officer  
Cisilion

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Is this a trick question? OK, there have been some highlights. Firstly, with the global pandemic, working remotely and spending circa six hours a day on Teams video calls has allowed me to connect on a much more personal level to customers, partners and our staff since we are all on video and in many cases now know (on some level anyway) their families, which has definitely increased the strength of many of my professional relationships. This has no doubt helped us as a business and we still managed to deliver our best financial year to date!

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Firstly, it would be over Teams rather than Zoom, but I'd have to say:

Michael J Fox – I've always been a fan of *Back to the Future* and also admire all the work he's doing around Parkinson's awareness and treatment.

George Lucas – goes without saying – I was born in the 70s so *Star Wars* has always been part of my life!

The Queen – I have no idea what I'd say to her, but I think it's incredible how the whole world, any age, any profession, any walk of life has embraced video as the real future of work and fun... it would be great thing to have the Queen on a call... I hear she's a *Star Wars* fan anyway!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I've been a bit boring to be honest as I've used the lockdown and whatever this "new normal" is to change my diet and



Working remotely and spending circa six hours a day on Teams video calls has allowed me to connect on a much more personal level to customers, partners and our staff and in many cases now know on some level their families, which has definitely increased the strength of many of my professional relationships

be healthier (body and mind) – not that I wasn't before.

I re-started running with a great coach via my Headspace app, and also started the keto diet (basically eat fat and don't eat carbs or sugar) which has been amazing... So as part of that diet, I have rediscovered my love for non-fat-free food, so my pleasures must now be full-fat yoghurt and eating lots of cheese!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

So many, but the one person that springs to mind is Satya Nadella. This is slightly biased as I run the Microsoft business within Cisilion, but the transformation of the company under Nadella has been so impressive – from zero to hero in security for one and the extensive development and drive of the PowerPlatform empowering community and professional developers with low-code and pro-code across LOB applications. It has been incredible to see organisations accelerate their digital transformation using this stuff and it's incredible to be a part of it (even it's just a tiny part).

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

I'm going to say two.

Work life: Microsoft Teams has almost replaced email internally and is the platform I use with my team, customers and almost everyone I work with on a professional basis.

Personal life: My Amazon Prime subscription. While I am a big supporter



of the local high street, during lockdown it was the only way we could buy sanitiser and toilet roll!

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I'd be my son. He's just started Year 1 at school and despite never wanting to go in, he comes home so enthused about what he has done and learned that day. To have that time again, to make new friendships that last a lifetime and to learn very day and love it, would be great for a week.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I did massively miss in-person meetings at the beginning but now we have these new local and national restrictions imposed upon us it's just normal. You know what – they are face to face – all the time. Within Cisilion video calls is the norm and it is with our customers – yes a few are video shy, but once some people turn on their cameras, the rest generally follow suit.

Events are a different matter. I do miss these. This year I have attended countless online/virtual events but they just aren't the same. There has been Cisco Live, MSFT Ignite, MSFT Build and Inspire – all have been online and OK. But the main value of these events is the networking and while breakout rooms and virtual chat help, its not the same.

The other key thing with virtual events is it's almost impossible to really focus without getting drawn back into the day job so I end up with multiple events/sessions in live stream on pause.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

We've seen it already and I think it's here to stay. We'll go back to something somewhere in between what we had and what we are in, but it won't go back. The channel I think will actually be a lot more personable – while there will be fewer meetings in bars, restaurants and offices, we will have more face time with customers over video and we will collaborate more on achieving the desired outcome, rather than the transitional meet, greet, chat, then send a proposal.



I started the keto diet (basically eat fat and don't eat carbs or sugar) which has been amazing... So as part of that diet, I have rediscovered my love for non-fat-free food, so my pleasures must now be full-fat yoghurt and eating lots of cheese!

There's a lot of uncertainty and therefore opportunity. Will companies need big LAN and wireless refreshes in offices, will they need more, or fewer meeting rooms? Will they refresh meeting rooms with smarter zero-touch/hands-free meetings?

On the flip side, we will see more adoption of cloud, new breeds of home networking (from traditional corporate vendors) and security will move to cloud – to protecting identities and data than protecting networks and LAN ports in offices. The channel will be more relationship focused and distance/travel

will remove barriers and open up the channel to more partners so competition will be even greater – leading to the need for partners and customers to form better, longer-term relationships.

I think we will see more partner-to-partner collaboration. As technology and digital transformation evolves and accelerates, many partners will develop niches, and those that don't will build partnerships with those that have to ensure they remain relevant to their customers and the changing world.

Change always has been – but is even more so now – the only constant.



# R

- **Phil Race**
- **Rafi Razzak**
- **Peter Robbins**
- **Hayley Roberts**
- **Peter Robertson**
- **Lizzie Robinson**
- **Christopher Roche**



## PHIL RACE

Chief executive  
AdEPT

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

I managed to escape to Cornwall just after lockdown eased, and we went kayaking on the Fowey estuary. I got to see a kingfisher skimming above the water, magical!

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Michael Sheen (he was great in a lockdown double act with David Tennant), Sophie Ellis-Bexter for her kitchen disco and Mary Berry for a bake-off teach-in!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Cycling the Chilterns during lunchtime in the great weather. I'd block out a couple of hours and escape.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I honestly can't think of anyone specific.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

I've upgraded my entire home set-up, with a new keyboard and RSI-prevention mouse but my big winner is a large Samsung curved monitor. I reasoned that my entire world of work is viewed through a screen so I might as well make it a big one!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I'd be either Banksy or John Motson. I



If I could be anyone else for a week, I'd be either Banksy or John Motson. I love art and Banksy has done a couple of great lockdown surprises on a London Underground train and a hospital



love art (I have an Art O-Level to my name) and Banksy has done a couple of great lockdown surprises on a London Underground train and a hospital. I am also a big Liverpool fan, so to get to see a couple of matches live would be great.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely. On a personal level we generate energy, ideas and personal networks from face-to-face interactions, which is both uplifting and challenging.

On a corporate level, generating

opportunities with new customers requires events, presentations, workshops and so on. which I know our sales teams are missing immensely.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I am hoping that forever more the subject of IT won't be relegated to 'any other business' on a board agenda, with all that this entails in terms of funding, attention to security and respect for everyone who plays a part in keeping the IT world moving.





## **RAFI RAZZAK**

*Chairman  
Centerprise International*

### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Reaching the age of 71 and still going strong.

### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Donald Trump, Winston Churchill and Mahatma Ghandi.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Playing solitaire.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Antonio Neri, HPE CEO. Antonio has

met the global pandemic head on, leading with his heart and stepping up to help partners navigate the economic fallout with a bold edge to cloud platform-as-a-service future.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Webex.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

The president of the USA. I would tell the world the mistakes that the USA have made in the past 20 years, especially in Iraq, and how to learn not to make them in the future.

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes very much. I am a social, tactile person. This Webex does not do me any good.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The channel has demonstrated over the past 40 years agility and durability. I am confident that the channel we will adapt and accommodate.



I am confident that the channel we will adapt and accommodate



## **PETER ROBBINS**

*Chief executive  
Probrand*

### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Avoiding COVID.

### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Elon Musk, Lady Gaga and Kevin Bridges.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Mass consumption of Netflix documentaries well away from the world of IT.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Satya Nadella has unequivocally enabled

business to adopt rapid change amid unprecedented times with the lowest barrier to entry via Cloud, most notably putting a human connection into video which has seen Teams rocket to 75 million daily users – two years of transformation in two months! This has helped business to continue, and presented massive opportunities for the channel.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Microsoft Surface and my mobile phone. TikTok certainly livens up life.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I'd be a ski guide in the Alps – teaching people to ski really badly!

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

COVID has challenged us all to rethink how we work, and with it has come efficiency and productivity, as well as demand for more innovation. With that the acceleration of subscription models will continue to change the profile of reseller business as customers demand a switch from capex to opex just as they did in 2008. COVID will also be famed for exponential growth in B2B e-commerce and massive investment to shore up logistics to meet demand. This is seeing a step change in our own supply chains and innovation within.



**HAYLEY ROBERTS**

Chief executive  
Distology

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Such slim pickings for most of this year as we have been faced with doom and gloom at every juncture. However, my business highlight has been how the Distology team have responded in this time of crisis and how positive and passionate they remain about the good work they do.

I am keeping my promise to navigate Distology through this pandemic and the team are totally keeping up their hard work and determination to succeed. I'm very proud.

My personal highlight was being able to take some time out after RSA earlier this year and travel down Route 1 to LA with my good friend and channel comrade Annabel Berry. I genuinely haven't laughed as hard since!

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

If I had a choice, I wouldn't be having a Zoom party – it's a bit of a contradiction in terms. But I would love a chance to talk to Michelle Obama, Brene Brown and Jay Shetty. You can see I have channelled my inner monk in lockdown!

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I am uber disciplined usually – training at least three times and no drinking during the week. Although I kept up my training (yup you can see my halo!) I did enjoy the odd glass or two of red on a few nights in the week. I know... it's a rock 'n' roll lifestyle!

Also, I discovered the joy of cycling



In my opinion, COVID is an opportunity to do things bigger and better than before!

and actually seeing places I never knew existed where I live.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

I have to say in light of the year being filled with COVID, Bill Gates has been inspiring. Not just because he almost predicted this virus would happen at some point, but because he remains true to a cause he is passionate about and is actually putting something back into the world after making his money. Total respect to him.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

I am a BBC News addict, so I always check this as soon as I wake up. When the peak of COVID happened, it was a great source of stats that at the time seemed a good thing to follow. Nowadays for the sake of my sanity and self-improvement, I am addicted to my Garmin app.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I would be a genius scientist and epidemiologist and find a fast cure for COVID, so we could all get on with our lives!

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Oh god yes! We are hard wired as humans for connection and there is some degree of personality lost with Zoom calls. Reading someone's body language and gestures is half the fun of face-to-face events and I don't think you ever really get to really know someone on a Zoom call.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I think with any response to a crisis, there have to be major changes – this is evolution, it is the way we grow and survive. Innovation and technology will have an even greater significance and so we have to evolve our working practices to suit.

I think this year has allowed us the ability to reflect and if things aren't working then let's change up a gear or even direction. Whether that be how we work internally or how we get products to market, we have to introduce new and creative ideas to the channel. This is the only way the channel will continue to grow and blossom.

Every mature industry has had to go through these changes in the past and technology is no exception. In my opinion, it's an opportunity to do things bigger and better than before!



## GLENN ROBERTSON

Chief executive  
Purechannels – The Channel  
Agency



This year will be remembered as the year the UK IT channel switched on a digital mindset

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Seeing Purechannels grow. With so much uncertainty around and so many friends, family, colleagues and industry contacts being adversely effected by COVID, I am super proud to say, albeit it with sympathy for others, that we have not furloughed and we have not made any redundancies. Not only that but we have employed new people, revenue is up, and we have welcomed a number of new clients too.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Freddie Flintoff, Will Smith, Dolly Parton.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Wearing shorts or tracksuit bottoms, T-shirts and hoodies every day!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Not one in particular, to be honest. I have found inspiration in more places than tech this year. Yes the tech leaders have done great... but has it all been their doing, entirely? Really? Yuan, Bezos, Gates, Dell, Musk, Roslansky have benefited and provided many great coping mechanisms for so many people. But these are somewhat expected.

My inspiration has come from things closer to home. My nine-year-old autistic daughter and what she has taught me about communication. Seeing both my daughters every day, for breakfast, lunch and dinner during lockdown. Being

able to sustain and grow the business, which has had the effect of securing our employees' jobs, so they don't have to worry, stay in work and look after their families. The key workers, NHS and otherwise, and what they have gone through. The many acts of kindness that have restored and/or revitalised our faith in humanity. My wife and her nailing home schooling! And the fact that so many things we consume and that consume us these days are essentially unnecessary luxuries.

I have loved a bit of simple living, appreciating time, getting back to basics. That's been inspiring.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Microsoft, particularly Teams and OneNote. I could make a good case for Ocado and Amazon too. Oh, and a wonderful new channel news aggregator called Nuzoo that has served me with channel news articles from all over the world as soon as they are published.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Peter Schmeichel in the week of the 1999 UEFA Champions League Final.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes and no. I have built much of my career through networking and face-to-face interaction, but actually video, and the possibilities that it provides has – I believe – allowed us to be more productive this year. I think the emphasis

on video and the lack of face-to-face interaction has enabled us to become more connected and return to being more human again.

However, the cancellation of big, annual events has had a big impact on the channel and its people, and at the same time, it has meant that we have had to move on, adapt, respond. There have been some great examples of diversification (I won't use 'pivot' as the best use of that word has already been made by Ross Geller in *Friends!*)

One thing the UK channel has been amazing at is demonstrating the ability to carry on and discover more, new, brilliant ways of continuing to do business, without the need to spend endless days in a conference centre. The new dawn of digital is here. We thought it came a few years ago, but it didn't. 2020 has been the year of understanding, adopting and learning how to really benefit from digital.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

With lasting memories, that future generations will be taught about. A genuine mix of sadness, devastation, opportunity and success punching imminent, sometimes expected failure in the face, then picking it up, dusting it down and welcoming it to share the experience!

This year will be remembered as the year the UK IT channel switched on a digital mindset. We will emerge with a greater understanding and new adoption of all things digital. Events, I believe, have now changed forever and will not be so



prevalent going forward. Vendors will wake up to the needs of partners and how to engage, educate and enable them on the benefits and tactics of digital for marketing and business development activity and how important it is for everyone to adopt a digital mindset, not just one or two designated people or departments.

This will fuel the change in buyer behaviour with more going online, especially as a first action, and therefore marketplaces, communities and ecosystems will continue to thrive, evolve and succeed, as will many new types of partner. Transition to and acceptance of the need to maximise partner experience will climb up the list of priorities as this year has reinforced and accelerated the need to work with partners on their terms and based on their needs.

Collaboration will increase between vendors and partners alike, and distribution will continue to increase and expand their value-add, cementing their position while changing outdated perceptions.

A much more service, experience, satisfaction-led sale will be the focus where expertise, credibility and confidence will be the priority as the buyer landscape continues to evolve across lines of business and the early stages of sales cycles will continue to evolve into more demand-led interactions.



## LIZZIE ROBINSON

Head  
QBS MSP

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Against all odds with the craziness of the world this year, I've had a great year! I turned 30 in Disneyland Paris, took over as head of QBS MSP which was an amazing personal achievement, taught my four-year-old son to read, and welcomed two new nieces into the world.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Josh D'Amaro, president of Disney Parks and Resorts so I could learn all the development plans and secrets; Ryan Reynolds for his amazing humour and Dave Grohl to play music for us all.



Against all odds with the craziness of the world this year, I've had a great year! I turned 30 in Disneyland Paris, took over as head of QBS MSP, and taught my four-year-old son to read

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Being able to sit in my hammock in the garden during my lunch break.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

The queen of software, Grace Hopper, who stated, "Humans are allergic to change. They love to say, 'we've always done it this way.' I try to fight that. That's why I have a clock on my wall that runs counter-clockwise."

At QBS MSP we live by the same philosophy and like to think that we do distribution differently. We're always looking for new and emerging technologies that challenge how things are done.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

We use Hubspot for our CRM and UC-One for our phone system – it was invaluable to us to have our data and phone system available to us instantly and be able to move to a working-from-home model at the drop of a hat.



On a personal note, watching Netflix has got me through lockdown!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Donald Trump – I'd step down as president.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I certainly miss the interactions with our partners and the buzz created at face-to-face events but I don't believe they always delivered the best results. Our teams are having to think of innovative new ways to get in front of new customers.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

The industry is adapting to the ever-changing economy and increased working from home environments which are inevitably changing buying habits and shifts in which technologies are priority.

I don't believe that the world will ever go back to how it was before and therefore the channel is having to find new ways to attract, close and delight customers.



**CHRISTOPHER  
ROCHE**

*Chief executive  
Celerity Limited*

### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

My personal highlight has been the way that all our Celerity staff have reacted to the complete change in working conditions and excelled in each of their disciplines.

There was no fuss, no aggravation, just knuckling down and adapting quickly, efficiently and seamlessly. I am immensely proud of what they all have achieved and what we have therefore achieved as Celerity. As a business owner in such uncertain times, knowing that you have such a strong team behind you is priceless.

### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Rishi Sunak, for a reasoned insight into what is actually going on in the country. Sir David Attenborough to gain a better understanding of what is happening in the wider natural world and Carlo Ancelotti to understand how to manage and motivate a group of individuals to achieve eminence.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I live rurally, so while in lockdown I have spent quite a bit of my spare time labouring on agricultural land. Fixing fences, clearing rocks and stones, topping fields, clearing woods, jetting drains, trying (and losing) to reason with sheep and all manner of activities that require zero digital input. It's a complete change of scenery that I really enjoy and allows me to switch off – oh and it keeps me from annoying my wife!

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

In this most strange of years to pick out one figurehead would be wrong as the tech industry has stepped up to challenges faced by the world in the time of the pandemic. Whether it is the leadership of collaboration companies that have allowed education for our children to continue, or the leaders of internet providers who have had to deal with unprecedented spikes in activity from home, or the medical technology providers who are working to innovate the delivery mechanisms and the treatments in these times, I think all the

leaders in tech both large and small have been inspirational.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Obviously, MS Teams has been fantastic during lockdown for employee collaboration, however I have found Celerity's Intuition platform invaluable for our business. Intuition proactively keeps me updated and gives me a view of the health and availability of all our systems and services. It gives me the assurance that our own internal data, our customers' data and business-critical operations remain safe and secure at all times while being managed by our security, systems and network operations teams. When the pandemic hit, we were able to switch to full remote working overnight and our business operations continued like clockwork, ensuring we continued to provide business-critical services to our customers.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I would like to spend a week as my daughter to understand how this world looks as a nearly 10-year-old child in current times. The world is a lot different from when I was 10. I would like to experience her love of netball and how a couple of chapters of the *Worst Witch* can be so calming at bedtime.

As a member of her school council she is trying to help others and make positive changes for her peers, and I know we can all learn from that. At her age, with

her peers, there is a profound sense of community and belonging which I know I could learn from. I'm also very keen to understand how easy it is for her to manipulate me, repeatedly. That would certainly be useful in future years!

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Absolutely. I have spent the last 30 -odd years in face-to-face meetings, so they have been a huge part of my working life. Much as I enjoy Teams and working online, I don't think there is any substitute for meeting people face to face. It's much more personal and gives you the opportunity to get to really know the person, their goals and aspirations and not just around their current role and projects – that is very important to me.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The shift to a managed service-oriented delivery model will continue to grow and accelerate in the marketplace alongside an accelerated focus on digital transformation for ourselves and our customers. The digital transformation focus has accelerated the move to hybrid cloud, meaning that although there will always be, and must be, a role for on-premise solutions, all channel businesses also need cloud solutions so that customers can work with the 'build once, deploy anywhere' methodology.

Agile, resilient and highly available has become the norm in services delivered to the channel's clients and moving forward, customers are unlikely to consider any solution that does not encompass these traits.



# S

- **Frank Salmon**
- **Matt Sanderson**
- **Neil Sawyer**
- **Dan Scarfe**
- **Lisa Scott**
- **Rickie Seghal**
- **Michelle Senecal de Fonseca**
- **Paul Shannon**
- **Alicia Shepherd**
- **Sarah Shields**
- **Jane Silk**
- **Lewis Simmonds**
- **Helen Slinger**
- **Mark Smyth**
- **Mark Starkey**
- **Dave Stevinson**





## FRANK SALMON

Chief executive  
CMS Distribution

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Elon Musk. Love him or hate him, he has transformed and disrupted the car industry for the better of us all through electric cars.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My Fitbit – from steps to sleep to workouts, it's been a great friend and motivator, I would also say my iPad has been great for Zoom calls.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I would be Mikel Arteta, and I would convince the Arsenal board to make Frank Salmon an honorary president for life with full access to all things Arsenal.

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Surviving the pandemic. Thankfully we were able to stay open and trade throughout lockdown, which was a great relief for all our people, vendors and customers that support our business.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Arsene Wenger, Tina Turner, Bill Gates.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Probably watching too much Netflix.



### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes, it's not the same without them. However, I've learned a lot about video calls and being more efficient with my time.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

It's a big question for every industry. I think the biggest impact will be a big percentage of people working from home, fewer face-to-face meetings and an acceleration of online sales and marketing.



## MATT SANDERSON

Senior vice president UK&I  
Ingram Micro

working diligently to ensure people could work remotely for the first time.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Peter Kay, Kevin Hart and Micky Flanagan.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Having the time to exercise! Being able to better use the two hours a day normally spent sitting in traffic has been refreshing.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Reed Hastings, Netflix CEO. Aside from the workaholic's increasingly successful business model, along with the unique culture built within the company, this year he took the time to set up a new initiative, providing \$120m towards scholarships at historically black colleges and universities — the largest individual donation to the institutions to date. This is on top of a further \$100m the Hastings Fund previously provided for improving education for underprivileged children.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My EarPods. A vital tool in the survival kit for anyone working from home in a busy household with teenagers, dogs, and endless delivery drop-offs.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Witnessing our team working tirelessly through the lockdown, helping partners to adapt and respond to the coronavirus crisis, while also having to adjust to different circumstances and ways of working themselves.

Overnight our organisation went from primarily office based to remote and the way they responded, making the right calls and decisions in tough circumstances, and supporting their colleagues, was tremendous. From HR on the frontline fielding questions from colleagues concerned about their health or financial security, through to IT

Ed Woodward (chief executive of Manchester United). I'd sort out the laborious transfer process seen each year.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes absolutely! We are all in the people business. Regardless of how tech-savvy we may be, face-to-face events are still a great way to build relationships and an effective way to capture the attention of others and drive productive collaboration.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Inevitably there will be many positive and negative long-term impacts due to the rapid changes we've seen. However, as we have already witnessed, the channel has shown tremendous resilience and ability to quickly adapt, enabling workers and businesses to instantly evolve in this new environment. Therefore, I believe the channel will successfully navigate any opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, continuing to demonstrate the true value it delivers.



Regardless of how tech-savvy we may be, face-to-face events are still a great way to build relationships



**NEIL SAWYER**

*Channel director UK&I  
HP Inc*

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

The opportunity to be able to read to my children every night since mid-March. It has brought such enjoyment personally.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

I could not think of anything worse than an online celebrity Zoom party!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Building an office from foundations upwards in the back



garden. And enjoying kitting it out with loads of cool HP technology. Complete with green screen and lighting!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

With everything going on in the world, I would definitely say HP's CEO, Enrique Loes has led the way in raising our voice around equal rights, diversity and inclusion. I admire his authenticity and he has led from the front.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

For the family, the Disney+ App has been great. Hands down a brilliant service.

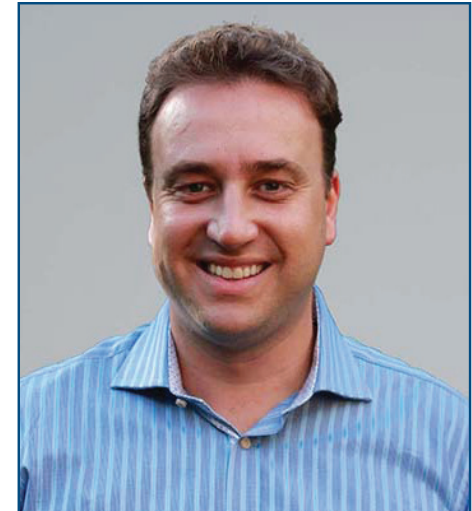
Having always used a laptop, I have now moved over to an HP Desktop Mini PC and integrated HP monitor with speakers, camera, mic etc. It has made a real difference for my home set-up. Although being out and about is something I hope is not too far away!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I miss face-to-face interaction with my colleagues and our partners. It is the best thing about our industry.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Digital-first has led the charge in strategy and conversation over the last six months, whether it be collaboration, cloud-first strategies, flexible location services or data-driven insights. This trend is here to stay.



**DAN SCARFE**

*EVP Global solutions  
New Signature*

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Moving to Canada. The height of a global pandemic seemed an excellent time to emigrate. It has certainly been quite the adventure so far.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Elon Musk, Richard Branson and Jack Dorsey. I would insist on using Teams though, naturally.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Online shopping. You know you've developed a problem when a package

gets delivered to you and you have no idea what it is so you get a fun surprise when you open it up!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Satya Nadella, of course. I love how Microsoft is now framing everything in terms of what the company's purpose as an organisation is.

The commitments to carbon and water neutrality and then reclamation are simply awe inspiring and hopefully will encourage lots of other businesses to do so as well.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Teams. My new OS.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Donald Trump. I would withdraw from the election race immediately. The world needs some good news right now.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes. That has been the hardest. Virtual conferences and meetings are nowhere near the same experience as in person. That can never be replaced.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

COVID will leave its mark everywhere. It will never be the same again. Hybrid working is the new normal and the channel needs to understand how to best support that.



## LISA SCOTT

Sales manager  
Alpha Generation/QBS

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Seeing both my children off to university, my son studying law and criminology and daughter studying adult nursing

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Gary Barlow (I'm old enough to remember Take That the first time around), David Jason (who doesn't love Del Boy?) and Reese Witherspoon.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Häagen-Dazs Salted Caramel ice cream and *Call the Midwife* (in equal measures).

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

It's a tough choice, but think I would have to choose Mark Zuckerberg. Love or hate social media and its power to track and promote to you with every keyword you put into Google, you have to be inspired by a guy who is a self-made billionaire by the age of 23!

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

WhatsApp.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

It would have to be Kate Middleton. A week as a royal I think would be just long enough to see life through their eyes.

Oh, and of course I really would love to know the real truth behind what happened with Megxit!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes, from a business point of view I strongly believe that face-to-face meetings are the way relationships are built and solidified. And from a personal point of view I really do miss the theatre!

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I feel now that with workforces being forced to work remotely and face-to-face business being something that wasn't possible for such a long period of time, personal relationships that have been built over many years within the channel have never been more important.



## RICKIE SEGHAL

Chairman  
Transputec

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

There is one thing that sticks out more than any other: it was very satisfying to see our crisis management strategy executed with ease and efficiency because we had the right software solution in place (Crises Control). I was able to share our experiences with clients and friends in business.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Rishi Sunak MP, Priti Patel MP and Alok Sharma MP, because these three people have been the rock stars in the current government. A Zoom party with them



would be fun. Technically they are not celebrities but in time they will be treated as such.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I have on occasion woken up 10 minutes before 9am, just in time for a meeting. Normally the day would begin with a 7am commute to work for 9am.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Greta Thunberg is not a tech figurehead but she is inspirational. What she has said has changed my thinking. The belief of infinite economic growth is a fallacy and one that nations have used as an excuse not to address climate change.

We need to return to the previous theory of economic growth, which is more suited to our current times and one that dispels the fantasy of infinite growth on a finite planet.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Microsoft Teams and Crises Control are the new game changers. They complement the current suite of SaaS applications to provide a progressive IT ecosystem.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I would be Donald Trump and I would acknowledge climate change and embrace scientific advice and lead the world to a greener and sustainable future.

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

No, not that much. I can get my information and knowledge from alternative sources. Virtual conferences are evolving, and they will become better and better. There is no shortage of information; Incisive Media's multichannel distribution of content is just one example of how knowledge can be consumed without the face-to-face event. Bring on more change, I say!

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

It will be a catalyst for a long-overdue change to a less wasteful and polluting future. Those that offer accurate and relevant informational content to the parties they engage with will be trusted and thrive.



COVID-19 will be a catalyst for a long-overdue change to a less wasteful and polluting future. Those who offer accurate and relevant informational content to the parties they engage with will be trusted and thrive



## **MICHELLE SENECA DE FONSECA**

*Area vice president, Northern Europe, Sales and Services  
Citrix Systems*

### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

My husband and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary during lockdown. Working and living alongside each other non-stop all these months at home fortunately just reinforced why we got married in the first place!

### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Eddie Izzard, James Corden and Graham Norton for the pure joy of being entertained.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I have not had time to watch TV in almost 15 years but somehow fell into the habit of bingeing Christmas movies throughout July on some cable channel or other. Predictable and over-romanticised plots where everyone drinks only hot chocolate – who would have known they were just the thing to indulge in?

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Gwynne Shotwell, the female engineer who is president and chief executive of SpaceX, the private space transportation services company founded by Elon Musk.

She has successfully guided the company's operations and growth, culminating in the long-held goal to be the first private company to launch astronauts into space – which happened in May when NASA astronauts used SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule to take them to the International Space Station. She is also an active promoter of the importance of STEM skills and diversity within her industry.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Citrix Workspace, of course. Without it I would not have been able to access any data needed to do my job or help our clients from home all these months. My Ninja blender for everything from smoothies to margaritas would be a close second though.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I would choose Jessica Ulrika Meir, the NASA astronaut, during her time on Expedition 61 where she participated in the first all-female spacewalk. To experience life on the International Space Station, be able to float in space and view our planet from above has been my life-long desire.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Hugely. From customer meetings to networking events to just taking my team out to dinner – I miss the energy and creativity that comes from personal interaction.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

COVID will accelerate the development of more service-led approaches by the channel. Customers will be looking for advice and assistance in optimising their businesses as they face blending virtual remote workers with onsite physical staff and addressing the newer security challenges that come from working in this hybrid fashion.

“ I somehow fell into the habit of binging Christmas movies in July



**PAUL SHANNON**

*Chief executive  
ANS Group*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Liverpool being crowned Premier League Champions after 30 years of waiting.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Dave Chappelle – my favourite current comedian; Bill Hicks – my favourite comedian of all time; and Deirdre Rachid – just to add a different angle and possibly some new material for me, Dave, and Bill.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

White wine and quizzes.



Sustained, meaningful social interaction is the key differentiator of primates and most other animals, without which we will become more mean-spirited and less generous with our time and love for each other



**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Lord Sumption. He has had the courage to rubbish everything about the coronavirus actions the government has taken and explain that dying should be our choice and protecting death should not be put above living life.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

WhatsApp – memes, videos and nonsense chat got me through the darkest days.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Boris Johnson – I'd use that week to actually show some solid leadership

and make some decisions that aren't pandering and weak.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I miss face-to-face anything. Sustained, meaningful social interaction is the key differentiator of primates and most other animals, without which we will become more mean-spirited and less generous with our time and love for each other.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I'm hopeful that the channel will realise that "solve not sell" is the most important mantra for working with customers. If we help them solve problems we are relevant, if we just sell them what we think they should need then we are moribund.



## ALICIA SHEPHERD

Director  
Terra Computer

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

My personal highlight has to be running four half marathons this year. I'm aiming for six but the clock is ticking.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Mary Berry as every party needs class, Elon Musk as his entrepreneurial skills appear to have no limits and maybe some would rub off on me, and Andy Murray as after watching his Netflix documentary I'd love to get into his mindset.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Walking my dogs every day, Pre-lockdown I would usually only be home once or twice a week in time to walk the dogs. Its great after a day of video meetings, calls and spreadsheets to get out into the fresh air and breathe.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

It's hard to drill down to one single person but for me it's about the tech figureheads who brought about technologies that have allowed business and social interaction to continue almost seamlessly during 2020.

Imagine if COVID had happened 10 years ago without the technology advancements we have seen in the intervening years?

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Microsoft Teams. We deployed Teams

across the Terra UK team and thanks to this we have stayed in touch with each other and our customers.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

My dog. She sleeps, she eats, she runs – it really is a dog's life!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

This is the biggest part of my role that I miss. I used to always have a packed diary of meetings with existing or new partners and various channel events – while we are adapting to online, virtual events, it's just not the same.



If I could be anyone else for a week, I would be my dog. She sleeps, she eats, she runs – it really is a dog's life







## SARAH SHIELDS

Vice president, central and northern Europe  
Dell

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

The most amazing part of working from home during 2020 has been the fact I get to be a part of dinner, bathtime and bedtime every night. I have also been able to sleep in my own bed every night and not endure sleeping on a plane or in a hotel room with an uncomfortable bed.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Trinny Woodall, David Tennant and Romesh Ranganathan.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

5pm drinkies! Every night at 5pm, I have either a gin and tonic or a pornstar martini. The joys of working in a CET region is a UK 5pm is 6pm in Europe so this is perfectly acceptable.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Michael Dell, obviously. We nailed this “WFH” initiative 10 years ago – and I’ve been a remote worker for 15 years now. The transition has been completely seamless and the vision of Michael Dell has absolutely paved the way for digital transformation; we have been ready for this (OK, maybe different circumstances if we had the choice) and we’ve been



Every night at 5pm, I have either a gin and tonic or a pornstar martini. The joys of working in a CET region is a UK 5pm is 6pm in Europe so this is perfectly acceptable

able to help customers around the world. Dell’s supply chain stood the tests of the pandemic and our teams have been serving customers throughout – without any downtime...

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My EE Unlimited data mobile phone package... Tech isn’t an issue in our house but broadband bandwidth is a constant struggle... 2 x VPNs, 2 x MS Teams online lessons and Netflix all streaming at once is not a great experience if we need to share broadband!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I’d be a frontline healthworker. I think the NHS has been incredible and the frontline health care workers are our true super heroes. If I could take a week in their shoes to give them a week off, that would be an amazing thing to do.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes and no... I am a people person and I love meeting my friends, family, colleagues, partners and new faces. I miss the social interaction and I miss the social chatter that comes with a face

to face meeting. However, I’ve loved reconnecting with my family and it’s a hard juggle to give up being at home every night for dinner, bedtime and bathtime to get back on a plane and pick up where I left off back in March... It will happen of course, but I will miss my kids MORE than I miss face to face...

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

The channel is resilient and robust and most of us have thrived during these times. Now is the time to capitalise on a new way of working and expand and leverage the new level of awareness of diversity and inclusion. It’s a new chapter and we can redefine who we all are.





## JANE SILK

Managing director  
Sigma Software Distribution

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

My highlight has been having the privilege to lead a team of people who really are committed to getting the job done despite the challenges we've faced since March. Talking to staff, customers and partners while they are working within their home office has given me a unique insight into their lives and this really has been fun!

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Michael Roux Junior for the food, Jon Richardson for the laughs, Fatboy Slim for the tunes.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Watching trashy films with my three grown-up girls who were all at home during lockdown.

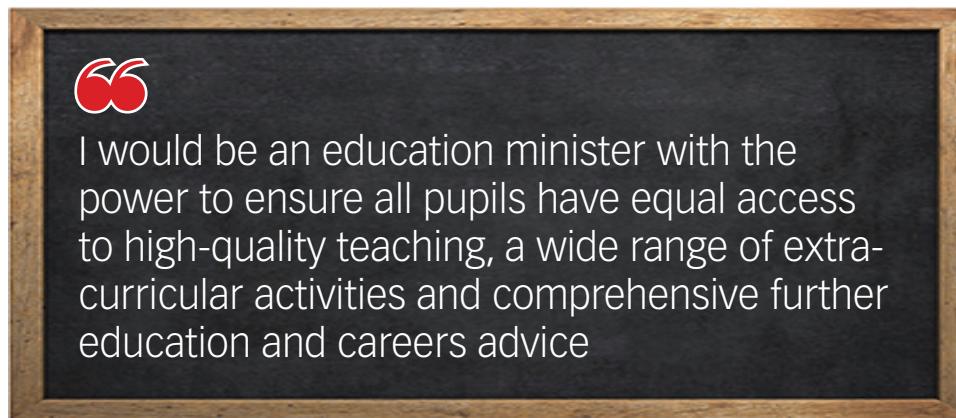
### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I can't pick one individual, but I think that there are many people within the tech industry who have been working behind the scenes to support efforts to combat the impact of COVID. This once again endorses how technology really can be used to benefit the many in society.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Microsoft Teams for my video calls, meetings, and the chance to see people's faces!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?



I would be the education minister with no alignment to any political party but with the power and money to ensure that all pupils have equal access to high-quality teaching, a wide range of extra-curricular activities and comprehensive further education and careers advice.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I have really missed face-to-face events over the last seven months. While we may all work in the tech industry, it is still the people who make it what it is and why it's a fun, challenging and diverse place to work.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Undoubtedly, like many industries the channel will have learned new flexible ways to work remotely. This should hopefully increase the chance for organisations to access talent, build relationships, speak to customers, and share in the wealth created in the channel regardless of their location.



## LEWIS SIMMONDS

UK channel sales leader  
Hewlett Packard Enterprise

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

I've really enjoyed the opportunity to spend some extra time with my children and look for new ways to spend our time; baking and fishing have definitely been among the highlights.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Peter Crouch, Maya Jama, Russell Kane.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Like I said above, I've had a chance to go fishing and teach my son a few times in lockdown. Not really a guilty pleasure on



its own, but I'm still not used to all the free time I've had through not travelling and there is something really enjoyable about taking a day off just to go fishing.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Antonio Neri, for the way he's navigated HPE through this pandemic, putting employees, partners and customers front and centre of everything we do with our Force for Good mentality, and also getting onstage and delivering the keynote at HPE Virtual Discover while recovering from COVID himself.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My Apple Watch and the Nike running app. It can be really hard to motivate yourself to get out and be active, but the ability to see how other people are doing, and how my own times have improved, really helps.

“ Not really a guilty pleasure on its own, but I'm still not used to all the free time I've had through not travelling and there is something really enjoyable about taking a day off just to go fishing



### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

My 22-year-old self. Then a better question would be, what wouldn't I do?

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Definitely. So much of sales is about interaction and relationships, and that's truest for the channel. The past six months have demonstrated how flexible we can be in adapting certain meetings to calls, but also highlighted the importance of face-to-face interaction for others.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

COVID is accelerating the way customers are looking at procuring their technology. We're seeing a rapid shift to consumption. Businesses need more than ever to be agile and have the ability to flex up and down their IT for demand. We have a solution in HPE GreenLake.



## HELEN SLINGER

Education director  
BT plc

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Being part of an organisation that stood up major critical national infrastructure programmes and initiatives in record times, including CareLines, a bedside communication product for the loved ones of critically ill patients.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Sir David Attenborough, Donald Trump and Miriam Margolyes.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Alongside *Tiger King*, having the time to really notice the changes to wildlife, trees, flowers and fields while walking my dog Trev each day – not least of which has been watching a pair of woodpeckers hatch, raise and fledge their chicks.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Bill Gates, who continues to use the wealth and voice Microsoft has provided him with for philanthropic purposes including COVID this year.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Simples – Microsoft Teams.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Carole Baskin, to find out what she knows about her missing ex-husband.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

I've missed the informal social bit of events, and the opportunity this provides to share and discuss ideas. I haven't, however, missed the travel that comes with events.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I think that the biggest change will be that video communication will remain as a real alternative for a lot – but not all – of face-to-face meetings, which will bring with it environmental and cost benefits.





## MARK J SMYTH

Chief operating officer  
Apogee Corporation, an HP  
company

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

The lockdown has forced us all to do things differently. I've wanted to visit Cornwall for some years but always ended up taking a break in Europe! This year when restrictions lifted in July and with no option to fly, we managed to ditch Zoom for a few days and tour the Cornish coast. While I'd visited on business previously, I never really had the opportunity to explore some of the many beaches – 300 to be precise – and the coastal towns. Of course we only managed few out of the 250 miles of coast but it was so beautiful, with

stunning scenery and beaches and very nice restaurants. It's changed my views on holidaying in the UK and has been a personal highlight this year. We will certainly be going back!

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Donald Trump, for the hell of it.

Russell Brand, a great mix with Trump, to stir it up!

David Beckham, hopefully he'd have some calming insights and influence on the other two.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I'm not really much of a red meat eater and neither is my wife. However, we established over lockdown that our local village store does the best fresh and local beef burgers and I would regularly take advantage of the fine weather and barbeque at the weekend and enjoy a burger with all the trimmings in the outdoors. And of course a cold beer or two!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I'm compelled to say Enrique Lores, our CEO of HP. He's seamlessly transitioned to CEO, been a steady, safe pair of hands and ably steered us through these past 12 months and focused and encouraged everyone to make a difference.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

There are two pieces of technology I

use regularly: my laptop and iPad. The laptop's the business tool and it's used constantly from early morning until I finally decide to stop work and I also use it on the go when travelling. So the laptop wins, while I use the iPad more for sofa surfing while chilling.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

It would have to be Jeff Bezos and I would instantly formulate a plan to utilise some of his billions of significant wealth to help positively impact and overcome global regions suffering extreme poverty and famine. The difference this could make in so many ways and so many countries would be astonishing.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely. Depending on the kind of event or meeting, there's no better experience and outcome than physical engagement and interaction. It has the ability to drive better outcomes and results and I personally can articulate far more in person than on a Zoom or Teams call!

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

I believe the long-term change from COVID on the channel will be similar to many organisations with less travel and more home, remote working, while I personally feel it's about striking the right balance. I know from my own experience, I've always worked from an office and that's certainly set to change for many in the long term.



## MARK STARKEY

Chief executive  
Sahara Presentation Systems plc

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Joining Sahara Presentation Systems plc as CEO at the beginning of February has been fantastic, although going into lockdown seven weeks afterwards was a bit unexpected.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Elon Musk, Jonah Hill and Leonardo DiCaprio.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Chocolate.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Elon Musk – he is literally pushing the boundaries of technology with both Space X and Tesla – total genius !

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Zoom.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I'd love to be someone with real musical talent for a week – maybe Ed Sheeran – and play to a sold-out crowd at Wembley.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Definitely. I was in Amsterdam for the ISE event just before lockdown and that seems like an age ago.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I actually don't think people will go back to the old way of working – everyone needs to be agile and so that brings massive opportunities for the technology sector and Unified Collaboration solutions in particular.



I was in Amsterdam for the ISE event just before lockdown and that seems like an age ago



**DAVE STEVINSON**

*Chief executive  
QBS Technology Group*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

2020 has been an amazing year. I was pleased that QBS was able to complete the acquisition of three software distribution companies during spring and summer lockdown, enabling us to expand into and across Germany, establish QBS in the Nordics and bring a focused security VAD into the group.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

PG Wodehouse, Ricky Gervais and Christopher Hitchens – that would allow me to sit back and enjoy the strong opinions from three excellent



I've been using the spare time to almost complete my lifelong collection of Wisden Cricketers' Almanacks – I only need an immaculate copy of 1875 if any members of the channel have a spare one?



conversationalists who are bright, articulate and incredibly amusing.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Using the spare time to almost complete my lifelong collection of *Wisden Cricketers' Almanacks* – I only need an immaculate copy of 1875 if any members of the channel have a spare one?

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

At the time of writing, Elon Musk for the astronomical level of value creation he has delivered with TSLA on the Nasdaq.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Drooms has been the most useful from a work perspective, but nothing beats the Apple iPhone for everything else.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

It would have to be Pythagoras and I would absolutely need to discover exactly how many of the attributed discoveries were actually his. I would also like to understand what life was really like in ancient Greece.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I miss them immensely; everyone must be suffering from Zoom fatigue. There are so many extra values that can be derived from in-person communication and also the added value from the unexpected conversations that just happen from bumping into past contacts.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

There will be no difference long term, yet medium term there will be minor changes to our working behaviour such as more remote working, more videoconferencing, and more virtual events. The channel is perennial and will survive and even thrive a global pandemic or two!



# T

- **Alex Tatham**
- **Julian Thompson**
- **Rob Tomlin**
- **Margaret Totten**
- **Ian Turnbull**





## ALEX TATHAM

Managing director  
Westcoast

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Westcoast's performance and resilience. Amazing growth when the rest of the channel has gone backwards. Tough times, tough decisions, but we have a great team – particularly our warehouse staff who have kept the channel going throughout.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Three of Fat Larry's Band!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Copious amounts of rosé – and I don't feel remotely guilty!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Clare Barclay – new UK head of Microsoft – a channel advocate supreme.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

FaceTime. It has kept my self-isolating Mum going.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Donald Trump – ban Twitter!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely. The few meetings I've had with customers and suppliers have been a joy.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Less direct business from vendors and increased consolidation.



I've drunk copious amounts of rosé – and I don't feel remotely guilty!



## JULIAN THOMPSON

Senior director, advanced  
solutions and sales  
Ingram Micro UK Ltd

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

There are three things: seeing the team's resilience, team work and innovation working together; seeing the teenagers looking out for one another; and finally seeing my nine-year-old daughter scoring the first goals of her football career. One was a left-foot tap, followed by a right rifle into the bottom corner.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

James Corden, Nasser Hussain and Jose Mourinho.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

A cold beer during the warmer months, sometimes pre-close of play.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Matt Sanderson, positive, strong leadership.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Teams, and WhatsApp for funnies and morale.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Boris Johnson. I would put in place clearer, honest communication without the spin and soundbites.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes very much. There is only so much you can do on a screen.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Ensuring technology always leads the way and listen more.



I'd be Boris Johnson and put in place clearer, honest communication without the spin



## ROB TOMLIN

Vice president and general manager  
Dell Technologies

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

In between the daily Zoom marathons, getting to eat dinner with my wife and put my daughter to bed every evening. has to be my biggest highlight of this year.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

I am going to go for my favourite comedians: Peter Kay, Katherine Ryan and Jason Manford.



### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

I think I have just about completed Netflix.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Our founder and chairman Michael Dell, as always, has been outstanding this year. Donating over \$100m to fight against COVID but also leading by example at all times.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

It has been tough not being able to go and see my children in the US, so I am very thankful for FaceTime!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

That's a great question. It would be great to experience that recurring dream of winning the World Cup with England.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Absolutely, Our industry is built on relationships which have been built over the years, many mostly started at events. However, when it's safe I am sure they will return.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Technology has kept things moving during this period. I hope/believe the mark it leaves is to attract more youngsters into technology.

## Lockdown loves

Perhaps unsurprisingly, **wine** was A-Listers' single most popular guilty pleasure. **Food** was the most popular category overall, with **21 per cent** of responses. Spending extra time watching **TV**, **exercising** and with **family** were also popular responses.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

#### FOOD



Chocolate  
(5)



Takeaways  
(3)



BBQ  
(2)



Healthy  
(2)

Honourable mentions: Sugar • Chocolate digestives • Taytos crisps • Pastries • Cake • Wine gums • Salted caramel • Keto popsicles • Pies • Ice cream

#### ALCOHOL



Wine (15)  
Beer  
Rum  
Gin  
Negroni cocktails  
Homemade cider  
Pornstar martini

#### TV/NETFLIX



Selling Sunset  
Below Deck  
Ozark  
Tiger King  
Buffy  
Call the Midwife  
The Boys

#### FITNESS



Cycling (8)

#### FAMILY



Spending time with family  
(6)

#### CLOTHES



Comfortable shoes/bare feet (3)

Numbers in brackets refer to number of responses



**MARGARET TOTTEN**

Managing director  
Akari Solutions

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Getting ADI, our diversity and inclusion teams app on the market, completely free. It has been a driver since we set up Akari to use our work in technology for good, to help kids and adults with hidden and situational disabilities find the answers they need so that was a huge highlight for me.

On a personal note it was getting to finally see my grandmother four months into lockdown. She is my rock and inspiration and I missed her smile, but as her care home was in lockdown we had only been able to do calls, so getting to see her again was amazing.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Gillian Anderson, Sarah Michelle Gellar and Emily Deschanel. I grew up with these kick-ass ladies and still adore them.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Netflix! From *Ozark* to David Attenborough it has kept me highly entertained.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Microsoft's chief accessibility officer Jenny Lay-Flurrie. Her drive to push more inclusion and break down barriers with technology motivates me. This pandemic has opened up a whole new way of working for people with disabilities and her passion and evangelism to open doors for people and drive this through is inspiring.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Teams! I know it is a predictable answer for anyone who knows me, but literally it has saved my life, sanity and productivity during this lockdown.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I wouldn't, I love people watching and imagining what their lives are like but I love my life, the things and the people in it so I wouldn't swap it.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes, one hundred per cent. I miss interacting with people and catching up, although I have been amazed at how well virtual events are going.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I think like elsewhere it will show how we can open up to new markets and experiences. We have been through lockdown but have become ever more connected and I think (hope) that will continue. I think the channel has really leaned on each other during this time and it has built some really strong and defining partnerships, so I hope that continues.



Microsoft's chief accessibility officer Jenny Lay-Flurrie has inspired me most this year. Her drive to push more inclusion and break down barriers with technology motivates me. Her passion and evangelism to open doors for people is inspiring







**IAN TURNBULL**

Managing director  
Pentesec



I thought long and hard about this for several days, weighing up what's important to me and who I am inside. I think I'd be Batman

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

A lowlight would have to include rupturing my Achilles in the middle of January – welcome to your 40s, Mr. Turnbull – but my absence from the office (good practice pre-COVID) has not hindered progress. The highlights for me would be receiving our third nomination in a row for a *CRN* Award, which is a great honour. We were also approached to deliver a number of critical projects for several global organisations with incredibly complex requirements involving world firsts. This was important for me as it recognised the abilities of Pentesec's team and allowed the business more opportunities to work at an international level despite working around the impacts of COVID.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Elon Musk, David Blaine and Martin Johnson. They're notoriously eccentric and engaging people who excel in areas I find interesting and they have a little bit of unpredictability about them that would make the party memorable.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

An increase in red wine orders paved the way for an investment in some home gym equipment. Very much needed given my injury (and increased calorie count!) I will not reference the brand for fear of an influx of requests as about one in three of the Zoom calls I have had in recent months has led to a conversation about this community or possible cult.

It has been a godsend for my recovery and has allowed me to push myself in a different way and a welcome break from the home office.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Great question, but I am opting for an alternative answer and an unsung hero. A friend of mine, Kevin, is an Advanced paramedic, who was involved in the initial triage of COVID-19 and the set-up of the NHS Nightingale facilities. He was featured in a BBC documentary recently, so I gained a greater insight into his day and the courage of all those involved in keeping the public safe. Frankly, what I do is a cakewalk in comparison, and we are very fortunate that people such as my friend are prepared to step up and do what they do. It is very inspiring and makes me proud to know that we support such organisations as a business.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Did I mention that I can order my wine from an app, while riding the gym equipment that shall not be named, which happens to be connected to the internet? Honestly, collaboration software such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom have allowed Pentesec to continue moving forward, keeping us sane with a little bit of social normality in these strange times.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I thought long and hard about this for several days, weighing up what's important to me and who I am inside. I think I'd be Batman.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I have even missed the routine of the commute. Mostly, I have missed being with the team and our partners. More than events, I appreciate the social elements of our roles in the channel. It will be interesting to see how engagement will change when restrictions are eased.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

COVID has forced the channel to transform and pivot to sell different and more applicable technologies for the world we currently live in. Unsurprisingly cloud has seen a massive increase as businesses have rushed to migrate to keep their services running and their staff working.

As a business, the way we operate has evolved and collaboration has increased in ways I was not expecting. We're holding more virtual meetings and can carry out support work remotely. Many tasks can be completed in creative ways, meaning engineers no longer need to travel across Europe as often to deliver projects.

But there is a balance and I think long term we will be more likely to question the way we do things and whether traditional approaches give the best results. Whatever happens next, it will be a while before people take seeing each other in person for granted.

**V**

- **Zak Virdi**



## ZAK VIRDI

Managing director UK&I, Iceland and Africa  
SoftwareONE

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Seeing how the business has come together during a really challenging year and how our SoftwareONE culture has cast its net far and wide to embrace and include all our staff. Also, being able to hire, on-board and make productive new starters to the business all virtually.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Prince Charles, Prince William and Prince Harry – it would be interesting to hear their family banter.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Late night binge-watching *Ozark* and *The Boys*.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Satya Nadella, hearing his employees all independently defining how his change of leadership has inspired them.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

To reconnect with friends – Zoom. To allow the kids to be educated and me to work across the business – Microsoft Teams.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

My six-year-old son. I would love to see the world through his eyes and see what he gets up to at school.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Of course, we are social creatures and need interaction.

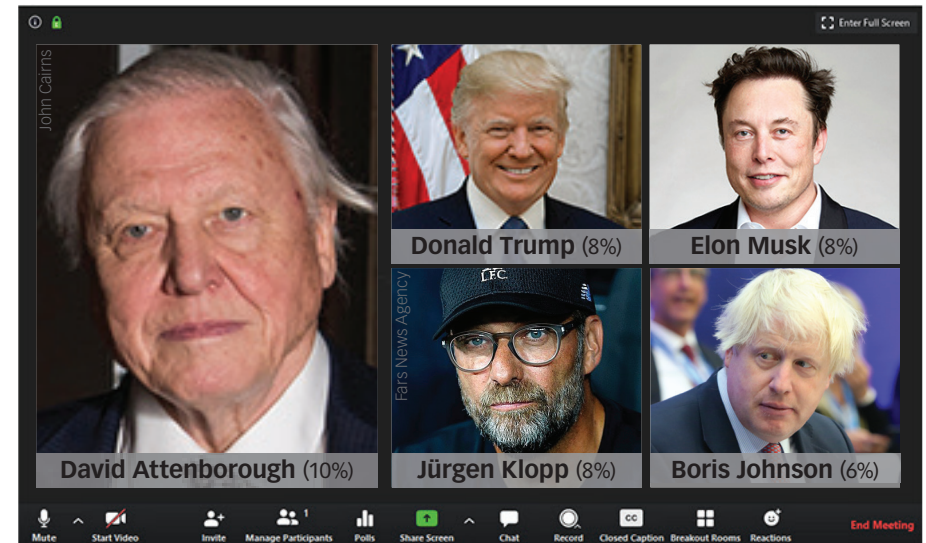
### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Our customers are under immense pressure right now with reducing costs, enabling productivity, pivoting business models, and reduced workforces. The channel needs to have offerings that are crystal clear about how they address these pain points, with a short time to value. Empathy and trust will become key differentiators.

## Noms de Zoom

A-Listers were keen to ensure a varied group at their fantasy Zoom parties. While **David Attenborough** was deemed the most popular and interesting guest, **Donald Trump** fared well too.

### Which celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?



### The four per centers



Ricky Gervais

Michelle Obama

Freddie Flintoff

### The three per centers

Phoebe Waller-Bridge • Peter Kay • James Corden • Kylie Minogue

*The two percenters:* Jacinda Ardern • Kevin Bridges • Katherine Ryan • Stephen Fry • Gordon Ramsay • Winston Churchill • Piers Morgan • Micky Flanagan • Bill Gates • Will Smith • Greta Thunberg • Lady Gaga



# W

- **Michelle Walker**
- **Dan Waters**
- **Graeme Watt**
- **Lorrin White**
- **Pip White**
- **Roger Whittle**
- **Angela Whitty**
- **Colin Williams**
- **Penny Williams**
- **Andy Wright**
- **Richard Wyn Griffith**



## MICHELLE WALKER

Managing director  
AAG IT Services Ltd

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Making my new office at home.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Snoop Dogg, Tom Hardy and Deadpool.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

A glass of wine with lunch!

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Tom Blomfield, founder of Monzo Bank, for founding a bank which disrupts the old guard and reacts quickly, even if it's

to correct its own mistakes – and they make things happen.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

Teams, regardless of how long it took them to catch up with Zoom.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

Janis Joplin and survive!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

No, they were never my comfort zone.

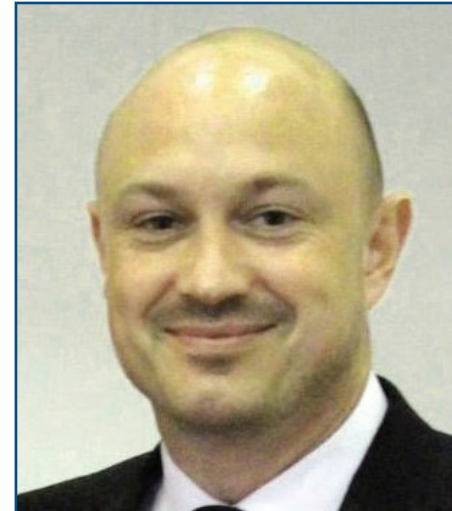
### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

COVID has highlighted the need for businesses to be more agile and responsive. Although some have been aware that agility was needed to stay ahead of the game, many have dragged their feet and were not prepared for the disruption, even though they were warned. Agile businesses will only work with channel partners who are themselves agile. They will want improved communication, less administration, speedier onboarding of new services and a better understanding of these services.

It's not all about the price any more.



It's not all about the price any more



## DAN WATERS

Country manager  
Arrow

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

My personal highlight has been getting to spend a lot more time at home with my family. Usually there's a lot of travel involved in my working week but as this has not been possible since the pandemic hit this year it's been fantastic to spend quality time with my family.

From a professional perspective, given the extremely challenging circumstances that we've all had to face this year my highlight would have to be seeing how amazingly the channel has flexed and adapted to new challenges to continue to drive value and serve the end customer. I've been especially proud of the Arrow

team in the UK and how we've been able to seamlessly shift to continue to support our partners and vendors even within a changing environment.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Jürgen Klopp, Gordon Ramsay and Taylor Swift (my daughter is a HUGE "Swiftie"!)!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

With a lot less travel needed it has been great to get some time on a daily basis to get a training session in – it would have to be HIIT training in the living room.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

A difficult question as there are a lot of hugely inspirational leaders in our industry. The one I would have to call out is Elon Musk – not only has he completely changed the game in terms of the automotive industry, he continues to challenge the status quo and disrupt across many verticals and industries.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

I have a new Guitar amp (Spark) with AI built into an app that gives you access to backing tracks, different tones and sounds – a fantastic way to jam even if you can't have people round!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

It would definitely be a week in the life of Jürgen Klopp but in an environment where fans could also participate in game day. To see up close the evolution that's been driven at Liverpool FC would be fantastic to be involved in (recent Aston Villa performance aside!)

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes definitely. This is very much a people-orientated industry so it does create challenges when this can't happen. We must think differently and continue to innovate to find optimal ways to continue to support our partners and vendors.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I definitely believe that the way the channel engages longer term will have changed for good post-COVID. There will certainly be a return to face-to-face engagements, events, enablement etc. However, these will be reduced as we find more efficient and cost-effective mediums to deliver a similar experience remotely. This will mean that the face-to-face connections that we do return to will be even more valuable and engaging.



This is very much a people-orientated industry so it does create challenges when this can't happen



**GRAEME WATT**

*Chief executive  
Softcat plc*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Just being part of the technology industry – we should all be very thankful that we are operating in an industry that has had a relatively lower level of negative impact from COVID.

I would like to thank our distributors and vendors for keeping things open and enabling us all to continue trading so effectively.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Jürgen Klopp, Jacinda Ardern and Billy Bob Thornton.



My biggest lockdown pleasure has been Peloton



**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Peloton.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Satya Nadella and Microsoft – they continue to transform and drive great performance.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

My laptop – and to think that many were predicting its demise just a few years ago!

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Dominic Cummings, to add realism into the government COVID considerations.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes I do – but not all of them.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

A hybrid working model for all us is the most obvious. We have seen an acceleration of trends in our industry and technology is a key ingredient to how we develop our lives in the future.





## LORRIN WHITE

Chief executive  
Bamboo Technology Group

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

The entire team at Bamboo Tech have worked hard to deliver exceptional service throughout 2020. They have remained fully operational throughout and as a result we met our 2019/20 financial targets and have achieved very high levels of engagement from everyone.

My personal highlights have been seeing the team complete a successful relocation to a desirable new location and knowing that as employers we have been exemplary in our communication, consideration and care for our people. I am very proud of that.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Jack Vettriano, Idris Elba and Jennifer Saunders.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Takeaway kebab.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

I tend not to look for figureheads in the tech space as I prefer to look outside my everyday sphere. Even so, in and out of the sector, I cannot pinpoint anyone who has inspired me from a figurehead perspective this year. On reflection, I am disappointed by the slim pickings.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

The MyFitnessPal app has been my essential lockdown tool. Without it I



My guiltiest lockdown pleasure has been takeaway kebab



would by now be purchasing an entirely new wardrobe – but not shoes. Finally, heels are surplus to requirements!

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I would be a food critic or judge on *MasterChef* so that I could eat all week, guilt free!

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Yes. While I have enjoyed the lack of personal awkwardness around the decision to offer either a two-cheek air kiss, handshake or ‘we’ve met twice’ embrace, it is much more about missing spending time in the physical presence of people I like.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

As a provider to the channel I feel we got a laser-like view, in a very short space of time, of how tenuous some business futures are. We never really know the

stresses our partners or supply chain are under until tested with acute disruption.

I am not overly confident that COVID will have much of an impact on how the channel operates as by virtue of what we provide a large percentage will have been sheltered from the impact. However, we may see sector-specific channel partners broadening their target markets which would be one element of risk mitigation. We may also see a swathe of channel partners introducing digital transformation offerings.

In both scenarios it will be important to consider digital assurance and resilience. Thus, I hope those businesses that found themselves worried for their short, mid and long-term futures will apply focus into their overall business resilience as a starting point.

As providers of critical services to the UK economy our resilience, or lack thereof, can affect channel partner and end-customer business in a heartbeat. We must be the resilient and reliable partners in the age of the digital economy.



**PIP WHITE**

Managing director UK&I  
Google Cloud

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

For the past 20 years, I have spent a lot of time travelling around the world and being away from home a lot. So my personal highlight this year has been spending some quality time with my family and friends at home in Cheshire.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Barack Obama – it goes without saying he is a legend.

Jacinda Ardern – I genuinely believe that women like Jacinda are changing the world just by being themselves. She is a true modern leader and most importantly her handling of a crisis is impeccable – what an inspiration!

Dermot Kennedy – I am listening to Dermot on repeat right now! He is the soundtrack to many a morning dog walk around the beautiful countryside near me.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I think it’s a mixture of my Peloton and podcasts, as they have both allowed me some headspace for which I was grateful – especially during the early part of the year.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Our CEO, Sundar Pichai, was named in *The Times*’ 100 Most Influential People of 2020. His analytical, humble and inclusive leadership style is incredibly refreshing and much needed during these times.



I would highly recommend Dr Edith Eger’s book, *The Choice*. She overcame such challenging situations and horrors through her time at Auschwitz but she has turned it into a positive experience

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Spotify for podcasts and music while walking and YouTube for keeping our family entertained while we have been at home.

And my steps app. I used August while on garden leave to raise money for The Brain Tumour Charity and needed a step counter for the challenge!

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Dr Edith Eger. Firstly I would highly recommend her book, *The Choice*. She overcame such challenging situations and horrors through her time at Auschwitz but she has turned it into a positive



experience and shared her lessons to overcome such adversity with millions of readers.

I admire her ability to turn something so awful into something so positive. A true story of resilience.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I miss human interactions but have found great comfort in technology which enables us to be productive and collaborate on a daily basis.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

The pandemic has accelerated digital transformation and our partners will play a significant and important role to help customers adopt our technologies and solutions at a rapid pace.



## ROGER WHITTLE

Chief executive  
Jigsaw24



Regular contact is vital but not too many long vendor Zoom/Teams calls please!

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

Donald Trump losing the US presidential Election on 3 November.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

I would lock Boris, Angela Merkel and Michel Barnier in a Zoom room and not let them out until a Brexit agreement was signed.

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Putting on a stone in weight.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Tim Cook for leading Apple brilliantly and Elon Musk for helping to change the world for the better.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

My iPhone.

### If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?

I would be Donald Trump, and I'd do the decent thing for everyone concerned.

### Do you miss face-to-face events?

Very, very much indeed.

### How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?

Regular contact is vital but not too many long vendor Zoom/Teams calls please!



## ANGELA WHITTY

Managing director  
UKI Partner Organisation

### What has been your personal highlight of 2020?

In a year like 2020 when there has been very little to be positive about, I have loved spending real quality time with my kids and having dinner with them every night. Sometimes it's the small things that make the biggest difference.

### Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?

Clearly I would never invite anyone to a Zoom Party! However, I would definitely invite Michelle Obama ( the US needs a sensible leader), Bruce Campbell (watch *Ash vs Evil Dead*) and Pete Tong for entertainment (and the Heritage Orchestra if possible) to a Webex extravaganza!

### What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?

Jacob's Creek Sparkling Shiraz, chilled.

### Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?

Corny as it might sound, but Chuck Robbins has been outstanding in how he has shown up this year. As a CEO at Cisco communicating and connecting with the teams, committing funds to support causes such as homelessness and poverty and being vocal leading the charge against racial inequality.

### What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?

I bought an Apple Watch close to the start of lockdown, and have become obsessed with completing my three



achievement rings every day. I'm currently on a 120-day streak.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

The prime minister of Barbados – sun, sand and rum cocktails!

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I really do. We ran our UKI Partner Forum in February, weeks before lockdown started. I miss the buzz of

those events and the chance to meet hundreds of people in one day.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Sadly I can't see us going back to how things were any time soon but I have been amazed at how our channel partners have stepped up to the challenge in supporting their customers and keeping their teams safe.

Innovation and creativity will set the successful partners above the rest.



I would be the prime minister of Barbados – sun, sand and rum cocktails!



**COLIN WILLIAMS**

*Business line chief technology officer  
Computacenter*

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

My 15-year-old daughter signing for Spurs U16s women's football team on the talent programme (even though I'm a Man Utd supporter).

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Will Smith, Michael McIntyre and Katherine Ryan.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Aldi, which I think is an amazing experience. I can't believe that I had not visited Aldi prior to the lockdown. You

can get two litres of Orangeade Zero for just 39p!

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Udi Mokady at CyberArk. Understanding how the organisation has reflected on the changing market, diversity and inclusion and evolving customer needs through 2020 has been enlightening.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

WiFi, hands down. If you are primarily not on the move and need to stay inside, the stability and performance of home broadband WiFi (or in too many cases lack of) becomes fundamental.

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

This sounds mushy, but my 15-year-old. I look at how she lives her life in awe at times, even with the pressures of being 15.

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes, but I have warmed to virtual mode based on the ease of access to many previously hard-to-access individuals.

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

Business value selling must become the norm. If society and business "next" will remain turbulent and changeable indefinitely, an adaptable business-driven evolution style of sales motion is essential (ahead of update and upgrade selling).



## **PENNY WILLIAMS**

*Sales director - UK public sector  
CDW*

### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Being responsible for running a public sector business that has adapted and responded to our customers' ever-changing needs, impacting positively in these very challenging times, has been incredibly humbling.

### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Stella McCartney, Caitlin Moran and Phoebe Waller-Bridge.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

I have two: chocolate and red wine.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Jeff Bezos – I would have been lost without Amazon Prime...there is a link here!

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp – my new world.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

I would be Jeff Bezos and would invest the profits made since the COVID pandemic to make an impact on climate change by buying the Amazon rainforest from Brazil – Amazon could save the Amazon.

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Yes, I miss the interaction and emotion from live meetings.

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

More adaptable, stronger, healthier in people and profits, creating long-term resilience and positive momentum.



I miss the interaction and emotion from live meetings



## **ANDY WRIGHT**

*Commercial director  
XMA*

### **What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

Getting back into running on a more regular basis and shedding 24lbs.

### **Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Jürgen Klopp, Freddie Flintoff and Kylie Minogue.

### **What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

Tesco's Italian Blush – very cheap rosé wine that comes in a box and can be consumed at any hour of the day if it's ice cold – if it's warm then vinegar is a better option.

### **Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

None. I've not really seen any of them doing anything amazing this year. The biggest strides in tech have been users working out how to get more from what they already have.

### **What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

All my tech; broadband, laptop, iPhone and M365, especially Teams.

### **If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Prince Harry. I would love to find out how he has managed to make his world even more complex than it already was to begin with.

### **Do you miss face-to-face events?**

I'm going to sit on the fence, I'm afraid. I have missed all the friends I have made from around the UK, Europe and the world as those events allow us to catch up. I do not miss the travelling, some of the dull presentations (sorry everyone) or the hangovers!

### **How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I think we will see a contraction of the channel in the short to the medium term but also a fundamental change in approach. The move to cloud and as-a-service has and will accelerate. Channel players will need to deploy different models and add different value in order to survive.



**RICHARD WYN GRIFFITH**

Managing director  
Softcat plc

**What has been your personal highlight of 2020?**

2020 has seen challenges everywhere for everyone, so it's sometimes hard to look for highlights. However, it would be tough for my personal highlight to look past my promotion to managing director of the company I've loved working at for the past 18 years.

**Which three celebrities would you invite to a Zoom party?**

Jürgen Klopp – as a huge LFC fan, I can't tell you how much admiration I have for this man.

Micky Flanagan – because he's just so funny.

Adele – because she and Micky would get on like a house on fire, and she'd be an incredible entertainer.

**What has been your guiltiest lockdown pleasure?**

*Selling Sunset* on Netflix. It's so bad, so

scripted, so trashy, but it's so addictive. It helps that I love property and interior design, and it's full of that too.

**Which tech figurehead has inspired you most this year, and why?**

Satya Nadella is inspiring at any time, but this year I've been exposed to more of him than I have in the past, and I think he speaks so intelligently and passionately. He has led Microsoft to a new era and I think they are doing an awful lot right and at the right time.

**What piece of technology, or app, have you not been able to do without during the pandemic?**

Without a shadow of a doubt it's my Peloton bike. Even without lockdown and no gyms, it would still be up there because when it comes to exercise, I just need someone to tell me what to do! Getting it delivered on 21 March was a huge stroke of luck!!

**If you could be anyone else for a week, who would you be and what would you do?**

Donald Trump, because it would just be for a week (thank goodness), I'd love to know some of the stuff he knows, and I'd like to undo a lot of things he has done!

**Do you miss face-to-face events?**

Sometimes yes and sometimes no. I miss what speaking to people in 3D actually brings us all, but I don't miss the travel!

**How will COVID leave its mark on the way the channel operates long term?**

I'm not sure it will because I think long term we may well put it behind us and get back to what was normal. Short and mid-term, there's obviously an effect to the methods we use to interact and build relationships with our customers, both new and existing, but I consistently see new and innovative ideas from across the channel in how we can do that.



*Selling Sunset* on Netflix is so bad, so scripted, so trashy, but it's so addictive. It helps that I love property and interior design, and it's full of that too





A BAROMETER OF THE TRENDS AND OPINIONS  
IN THE CHANNEL TODAY

# CHANNEL CONFIDENCE INDEX

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