**IDC OPINION**

Digital transformation (DX), the process of creating value, growth, and competitive advantage through new offerings, new business models, and new business relationships by leveraging computing and telecommunications technologies, is changing the way that business gets done. Business survival in the digital economy era requires new thinking about IT architecture and the creation of IT environments in central datacenters and in increasingly "smart" digital edge locations. These increasingly cloud-based IT environments support innovation, accelerate business velocity, and enable business dynamic scaling, and greater operational flexibility. As IT expands from being the back-office enabler of internal business processes toward a more prominent role as the engine powering digital business flows between people, locations, clouds, and data, the old model of centralized IT siloed inside enterprise datacenters is no longer sufficient.

The DX journey is all about enhancing the operation of digital business workflows and delivery of digital experiences. However, as organizations embark on the DX journey, many face challenges in integrating and interconnecting the multiple IT systems, cloud services, networks, critical locations, and partner ecosystems. Existing inward-focused IT and network environments cannot accommodate the interdependent "extended enterprise" ecosystems that are a key feature of the digital economy.

IDC believes that DX requires a more flexible approach to the organization and physical location of IT and application resources. These digital delivery IT stacks need to be located in close proximity to the hospital, store, factory, or city where the business ecosystem participants (e.g., employees, customers, vendors, and partners) that need to consume them are located. Organizations must also be able to place resources close to critical new cloud-based services that provide access to massive data and compute resources for building innovative new services. This, in turn, requires flexible connectivity to tie together geographically dispersed digital business supply chains and provide on-ramps for customers, partners, suppliers, and IoT-enabled endpoints.

DX starts with a new interconnection-first platform for digital business that integrates strategically located datacenters; ecosystems of networks, clouds, and business partners; and enterprises' own IT and business process stacks. Interconnection platforms are the foundational layer of the digital economy, providing a flexible, technology-centric business fabric that is able to adapt to changing market requirements and expand on demand to pursue new market opportunities at the digital edge.
IT CHALLENGES ON THE ROAD TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Digital disruption is inevitable for enterprises in every industry as traditional ways of doing business give way to new business models that shift value (and revenue) to digital offerings and customer experiences. According to *IDC FutureScape: Worldwide IT Industry 2017 Predictions* (IDC #US41883016, November 2016), one-third of the CEOs of Global 2000 companies will have at least five years of experience in technology, driving their organizations’ digital transformation.

Enterprises that do not implement digital transformation initiatives will struggle to respond to changing market and customer demands. The near-term result is margin pressure on the traditional business; the inevitable longer-term results are accelerating revenue decline and lost market share, market position, and market relevance as nimble, "born in the cloud" rivals outpace digital laggards in executing on the scale, speed, operational efficiency, and innovation needed for success in rapidly changing DX-driven markets.

Information Technology: The Engine Room of the Digital Economy

IDC's 2015 *Digital Transformation MaturityScape Benchmark Study* revealed that 64% of enterprises are either "digital explorers" or "digital players" in the early stages of applying digital technologies to drive operational, process, and business model changes. However, 22% of organizations are farther along in the journey – these "digital transformers" and "digital disruptors" have established leadership in delivering digital products, services, and customer experiences while disrupting existing markets and creating new markets through continuous digital innovation.

Technology has moved from the mainframe in the computer room (IDC's 1st Platform) to the desktop (IDC's 2nd Platform) with the client/server distributed computing model and has now entered the 3rd Platform era in which technology is embedded into nearly every aspect of business operations, business delivery, and customer support. The four pillars of the 3rd Platform – cloud, mobility, social business, and big data/analytics – are the raw IT materials for DX (see Figure 1). These technologies facilitate new ways of doing business and must be embraced not as point solutions but within the broader context of next-generation business-enabling IT. However, DX becomes unachievable when 3rd Platform technologies are not integrated with legacy systems and are positioned as a "bolt on" to the existing disconnected 2nd Platform framework of siloed client/server systems centralized in enterprise datacenters. For 3rd Platform-native "all digital" IT organizations, building digital business stacks on an interconnection platform connecting people, locations, clouds, and data enhances the ability to scale and expand in a distributed topology fashion as dictated by business requirements. This flexibility enhances business velocity and supports improved leverage of existing infrastructures and IT investments.

3rd Platform business environments are interconnected and interdependent – no company or business process is an island in the DX era. DX requires an all-in commitment to the digital workflow approach, which involves multiple IT systems, networks, geographic locations, and partner ecosystems/"communities of value." The foundation of the new IT architecture for digital business is an innovation-focused technology platform positioned to bring together the dynamic business ecosystems of people, locations, networks, things, clouds, and data/analytics systems in an agile, scalable, and interconnected manner. Therefore, business survival in the 3rd Platform era starts with a shift toward *interconnection-first* thinking about connected digital workflows.
New IT Architectures for the Digital Economy

The future of business is digital and requires digital business platforms to accommodate the ever-expanding "extended enterprise" that shifts organizational boundaries far beyond the traditional perimeter of the enterprise datacenter. The "enterprise edge" is no longer just one location but everywhere that your business operations and customers are (or need to be), including physical and virtual storefronts, hospitals, factories, airports, and customer touch points (i.e., mobile apps). You must also be prepared to deal with a growing base of smart IoT-enabled endpoints at these edge locations that capture and transmit data. DX-oriented 3rd Platform IT must accommodate geographically dispersed (and ever-shifting) partner, customer, supplier, and IT service provider communities. This imperative highlights the need for a new approach to connecting the various ecosystem participants.
The end state of DX involves interdependent business and IT models that work together to deliver on digital fulfillment. Full leverage of DX-enabled innovation, velocity, and value creation requires a scalable framework to handle multicloud/hybrid IT consumption and delivery models and streamlined access to a diverse ecosystem of global, national, and local carriers. This framework must also support IT environments in which multiple centers of business gravity — B2B, B2B2C, B2C, and B2E — can collaborate in an agile manner to form intra- and interenterprise communities as needed to create value and sustainable competitive advantage for the various participants.

An exchange or a marketplace plays a key role in a DX-optimized 3rd Platform IT framework. Enterprises need a platform that can streamline the process through which business supply chain participants exchange data, content, ideas, value, and opportunity through trades, transactions, creation of composite digital offerings, and delivery of customer experiences. In the digital economy, these outputs are modular and software based and are composed via API calls. Digital business is iterative, requiring the ability to "fail fast." Therefore, digital supply chains, spread out across multiple enterprises, cloud services, and geographic locations, must be integrated and interconnected into an adaptable technology-enabled business fabric that operates in real time to accommodate dynamic, responsive data and transaction flows. This type of interconnection-oriented IT environment requires critical networking links connecting the distributed IT and application infrastructures of the digital business ecosystem participants — which, in turn, requires an environment featuring dense multipoint-to-multipoint connectivity as well as critical mass of business and IT ecosystems that can interact in real time to cocreate and deliver shared value.

THE INTERCONNECTED, DIGITAL DELIVERY ENTERPRISE IN 2020

IDC believes that by 2020, 50% of Global 2000 enterprises will see the majority of their business depend on their ability to create digitally enhanced products, services, and experiences (see IDC FutureScape: Worldwide IT Industry 2017 Predictions, IDC #US41883016, November 2016).

Investments in IoT-based data capture and reliance on "data pipelines" (internal and external data sources providing market/customer insights that fuel digital innovation) are key features of the digital economy.

Creating sustainable competitive advantage in the digital economy also requires smart use of capabilities that reside outside your organization. Third-party cloud/IT services also play a role here, as do industry cloud platforms — strategic hubs for massively scaling up digital supply chains and digital distribution networks within and across industries. IDC predicts that industry cloud platforms will become an increasingly vital component of digital supply chains and digital distribution channels in the expanding DX economy. More than 50% of large enterprises will be creators of or major participants in one or more cloud-based industry ecosystems by 2018. Connecting to external developer communities through industry cloud platforms and APIs will be an essential ingredient in fueling innovation-oriented scale-up DX strategies.

Building an interconnection-oriented environment requires a partner capable of bringing all the pieces together. The complexity of orchestrating and managing digital business workflows in a point-to-point fashion makes it impractical (if not impossible) for organizations to take a DIY approach to building and maintaining the environments needed to support access to global markets, regional connectivity and network choice, distributed datacenter footprints, and digital ecosystem gravity. An optimized interconnection-oriented architecture (IOA) — an "interconnection first" approach to datacenter leverage and operation — can bring people/businesses, locations, clouds, and data together in ways
that exploit the opportunities (and mitigate the challenges) of digital transformation. An IOA must be fully meshed, featuring strategically located facilities that can serve as edge aggregation hubs for both enterprise IT rationalization/consolidation and ecosystem centers of gravity and "extreme edge" points of presence. These facility locations move enterprises' digital business stacks physically closer to customers, supply chains, and business partners, reducing latency and mitigating risk.

External cloud/IT services and intercompany business partnerships are key features of the ecosystem-oriented framework of the digital economy and digital experience fulfillment. Given this backdrop, organizations must emerge from their traditional siloed and centralized IT environments and move their business operations into something that looks more like an exchange – a new business engagement model that ties together the people, locations, clouds, and data required to make digital transformation a reality.

The right partner with the right mix of datacenter facilities, interconnection enablers, ecosystems of network and cloud service providers, and critical mass of digital exchanges and industry clouds can address many of the barriers standing between enterprises with a 2nd Platform-era IT approach and their evolution toward more agile, DX-centric IT environments. Business and IT leaders tasked with driving their organizations’ DX efforts must ask themselves the following questions:

- Are our existing IT systems up to the task of meeting the digital economy imperatives of rapid product/service creation and iteration with optimized capacity, scale, flexibility, and operational cost?
- Is our current digital delivery IT stack housed at the right locations to engage and interact efficiently with the external participants in our digital business supply chains, enabling us to deliver digital "quality of experience" to our customers?
- Is our organization (and are our IT systems) well positioned to seize the initiative on emerging business opportunities in new geographies or lines of business without compromising, and perhaps improving, security, performance, and operational efficiency?

Digital transformation relies on agile IT to enable real-time innovation and development environments with dynamic business workflows that span multiple IT systems, networks, geographic locations, and ecosystem-oriented "communities of value." In the digital economy, products, services, and business processes are modular and software based, delivering value through composite applications or mashups over secure high-speed interconnections integrating multiple partners' networks. Digital business workflows are data- and transaction-intensive environments in which distributed resource tiers for database, payment processing, business logic, and presentation may be located in multiple private and/or public clouds. Digital services, typically personalized in some fashion based on cognitive and big data-driven insights, are dynamically assembled and "shipped" to the end user in milliseconds. Therefore, the scale and reliability of services delivered depend on the quality of the interconnection environment.

Optimized physical placement of digital delivery IT stacks streamlines the digital business process by facilitating closer proximity to the partners, customers, markets, and resources to which your organization requires digital interfaces. This environment can be developed, iterated, and replicated in an interconnection-oriented "digital exchange" setting that provides security, performance (i.e., low latency), and "communities of value" aggregation. This can serve as the foundation for organizations' digital reinvention by eliminating the capex and opex of the DIY internal datacenter model approach, reducing TCO, and accelerating the ROI of digital transformation.
Equinix, which began life in the late 1990s as a more efficient peering and interconnection approach for ISP networks deluged by rapidly growing internet traffic, is well positioned to help enterprises on their digital transformation journeys. The company’s global leadership in carrier-neutral datacenters, interconnection, and digital business exchanges enables, optimizes, and protects business by providing a flexible digital business platform built on connectivity-dense, high-performance, secure datacenters with 99.99999% uptime.

Equinix operates 145+ International Business Exchange (IBX) datacenters strategically located in 40 major metropolitan markets in 21 countries across 5 continents with programmable, software-defined interconnection services that connect enterprises to the world’s largest ecosystems, or “centers of business gravity” (see Figure 2). Equinix Internet Exchange, Equinix Cloud Exchange, and datacenter cross-connects provide real-time, low-latency access to 1,400+ global, regional, and local networks; 2,500+ cloud and IT service providers; and a financial services community/exchange of more than 1,000+ key players as well as digital business ecosystem exchanges for digital payments, media and content, programmatic digital advertising, healthcare records, and IoT.

FIGURE 2

Equinix Global Platform

This combination of technology, interconnection, critical-mass communities, and industry expertise comes together in the form of Platform Equinix, a “meet me” hub for digital creation, fulfillment, and distribution that facilitates rapid, low-latency transactions; data movement and sharing; and real-time customer/market responsiveness. Through Platform Equinix, businesses can directly access private, secure, and scalable connectivity to cloud providers and execute on DX strategies with dynamic ecosystems of business and digital supply chain partners worldwide. This platform positions Equinix as a strategic partner for enterprises that want to organize their digital business-enabling IT, datacenters,
and network operations in a globally consistent manner as well as gain access to professional services expertise and new partner-driven business opportunities.

Platform Equinix has the building blocks needed to build an interconnection-oriented architecture that addresses the challenges inherent in the dispersed nature of digital business environments. Adopting an IOA approach involves a collection of interconnected ecosystems with functions for communications networks (connecting locations) and data management (proximity-based placement of data stores and analytics systems) that are geographically distributed, internetworked, and colocated at the edge (i.e., outside of centralized enterprise datacenters and networks). Essentially, Platform Equinix is a next-generation DX-centric ecosystem that enables optimized physical and virtual placement of IT infrastructure, applications, and databases in ways that reorient enterprise IT into discrete digital components that can be invoked as needed to dynamically construct scalable business workflows.

Organizations can build interconnected enterprise solutions on Platform Equinix starting with the following foundational building-block capabilities (see Figure 3):

- **Global network of top-tier datacenters.** Strategically positioned in the major metropolitan and global financial markets in the Americas, EMEA, and Asia/Pacific where customers, business partners, and cloud/IT service providers are located, Equinix's more than 145 IBX datacenters serve as the distributed centers of digital business gravity in which enterprises can conduct business on a global scale with localized edge proximity, leveraging a fabric-based topology centered around users, applications, and data workloads instead of complex and suboptimal point-to-point environments.

- **Equinix Internet Exchange and cross-connects.** Enterprises that organize and aggregate their IT in Equinix datacenters can directly connect within a single IBX or across multiple IBXs in a metro area to business partners, business-supporting IT and cloud services, and network service providers (both upstream internet backbone networks and downstream last-mile networks). Colocation and one-to-one cross-connects eliminate the need for local loops and dark fiber and thus provide enhanced network performance through physical proximity to enterprises' external DX ecosystems. The Equinix Internet Exchange further simplifies the interconnection process by enabling more efficient, settlement-free traffic exchange among networks.

- **Ecosystems.** The critical mass of networks, IT/cloud service providers, and industry trading/business process communities built up by Equinix over the years is difficult for competitors to replicate and impossible for enterprises to create on their own. Equinix provides buyers and sellers of technology and digital business capabilities with a marketplace to deliver and consume services, while organizations in trading and transaction-oriented businesses and those with intercompany "mashup" value propositions can converge in Equinix datacenters to do business globally at industrial scale.

- **Expertise.** Equinix's datacenter and networking professional services can help organizations with the strategy and execution of their DX-focused IOAs, thus building a foundation for new business models in an environment more conducive to dynamic, collaborative, and repeatable digital workflows. Services and capabilities include Equinix Professional Services for Cloud (consulting services for on-premise to cloud migration), Global Solutions Architects (individuals who work with customers to design optimized infrastructure environments), and Solution Validation Centers (dedicated space in selected Equinix datacenters where customers can validate, test, and deploy infrastructure designs).
In addition to addressing connectivity challenges with external partners and suppliers, Platform Equinix supports targeted solutions that address the WAN management and data placement challenges that block the path toward fully realized DX. These solutions include (see Figure 4):

- **Performance Hub.** A key building block of IOA used to establish an edge node, Performance Hub offers enterprises a repeatable approach to transport optimizing and scaling connectivity between people, locations, clouds, and data through the corporate WAN. Performance Hub extends enterprises’ business-enabling IT systems to interconnect with ecosystems of customers, partners, cloud services, and networks by acting as a network aggregation point within Equinix’s "center of digital business gravity" IBX datacenters, to enable:

  - **Simplified, more cost-effective WAN architectures.** With Performance Hub, enterprises can leverage Equinix IBX datacenters as distributed network points of presence providing aggregated traffic termination from the edge as well as low-latency, higher-throughput access to IT resources and applications that can be strategically placed at the edge in closer proximity to the customers, partners, and employees that need access to them. Performance Hub expands WAN connectivity options for enterprises with the range of networks and clouds available in Equinix’s partner-dense datacenters, enabling the rapid creation of distributed digital business on-ramps to end users in new geographic markets.
Furthermore, use of Performance Hub-based network nodes can reduce overall WAN costs by replacing traditional hub-and-spoke or point-to-point MPLS architectures with metro Ethernet connections to the nearest network-dense Equinix datacenter.

- **Multi- and hybrid cloud deployment support.** Enterprises can leverage Performance Hub to establish optimized hybrid cloud environments by interconnecting on-premise or collocated private compute and/or storage systems with public cloud provider resources via Equinix Cloud Exchange. This approach facilitates workload mobility between public/private and on-premise/off-premise cloud deployment models while maintaining enterprise control over mission-critical applications and sensitive business data.

- **Enterprise topology rewiring.** By deploying communications gear in Equinix Performance Hubs, enterprises can leverage a secure mesh topology that is able to continually change and scale as needed to accommodate changing network traffic patterns, evolving connectivity requirements of business ecosystems and end users, and changing business and market conditions.

- **Integration of many-to-many localized connections.** Performance Hub provides secure intersection points for business and services to meet (and interconnect) with distributed IT and application resources, including digital business stacks deployed as private clouds as well as third-party cloud services accessed via Equinix Cloud Exchange.

- **Network security management.** By managing connections to multiple network services through distributed networking hubs, enterprises can meet their communications security requirements with greater ease and consistency.

- **Equinix Cloud Exchange.** This switched network fabric enables enterprises to create multiple secure, high-performance virtual connections to third-party cloud services through a single physical network port, supporting multicloud and hybrid cloud IT environments. Following the deployment of a Performance Hub, which can be used to manage local cloud connectivity traffic, Equinix Cloud Exchange provides:
  - Scalable access to a diverse (and expanding) cloud services ecosystem of IaaS, PaaS, and SaaS providers, including, but not limited to, Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud Platform, IBM SoftLayer, and Oracle Cloud
  - Global access to Cloud Exchanges in 21 markets across Asia, Europe, and the Americas
  - Streamlined, single-port multicloud access with automated API-based provisioning and a software-defined orchestration layer enabling secure private connections to multiple public cloud services
  - Low-latency, direct, private Layers 2 and 3 access to third-party cloud resources, which mitigates the performance, reliability, and security issues of best-effort public internet access

- **Data Hub.** An extension of the Equinix Performance Hub and Equinix Cloud Exchange framework, Data Hub provides an agile, cost-effective, and interconnected compute and storage solution to address organizations’ growing demand for scalable data collection and data protection along with increased use of real-time analytics and IoT-oriented applications. It plays a key role in helping customers more effectively leverage the datacenter facilities needed to build 3rd Platform applications and run data-driven businesses. Use of Data Hub enables:
  - Delivery of the facilities that customers can use to build an optimized, globally distributed data platform in datacenters located in strategic markets while remaining in compliance with the increasingly complex range of data sovereignty rules regulating data placement, movement, and access (The ability to create private storage environments in facilities with cross-connect access to cloud providers and business partners serves DX-centric business goals while reducing business risk.)
- Assurance of the maximum level of geographic choice, with Data Hub facilities located in 40 of the world's top business markets
- Full control of business-critical data as well as rapid access to important third-party data while meeting security and compliance demands
- Access to a rich ecosystem of peers that can share supplemental data, as well as interconnection opportunities to the leading cloud data analytics service providers, allowing for efficient data enrichment to drive high-quality insights

**FIGURE 4**

**Platform Equinix Solutions**

The result is a platform focused on enabling interconnection, which is the mechanism that accommodates the different combinations of people, locations, clouds, and data that need to engage, interact, and connect in digital supply chain environments.
CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

The interconnected enterprise offers businesses a foundation for "crossing the chasm" to exploit the promise of 3rd Platform-driven digital transformation. Agile development, rapid delivery, cross-industry collaboration, and data-driven innovation are standard features of the digital economy. Agile development requires, Agile IT, and Agile IT requires Agile datacenters. Opportunity is abundant for enterprises that implement IT frameworks that support the flexibility, extensibility, scalability, and interconnectivity needed to run the business and generate new revenue streams in the digital economy. The interconnected enterprise enables:

- **Reconstructed, secure business workflows.** Industrializing innovation requires that IT raw materials – applications, databases, content repositories, and data stores – be integrated and accessible to multiple business stakeholders across and beyond the enterprise for dynamic and iterative development of new cost-saving and revenue-generating ways of doing business. To play (and succeed) in the digital economy, enterprises need a technology architecture that focuses on dedicated secure interconnection (first) to support scalable, dynamic digital workflows and distributed business intelligence.

- **Enhanced digital "innovation capacity."** The digital economy runs on code and speed. The ability of enterprises to grow and compete will depend increasingly on the size and talent of their coding teams and their ability to leverage others’ innovation into their own internal supply chains (to fast-forward time to market) as well as the availability of an extensible IT architecture that supports flexible service creation and service delivery for developers, engineering, operations, product management, sales, marketing, and customer service.

- **Increased business agility.** Disconnected islands of IT/application resources, developer talent, business process systems, and distribution channels add up to operational inefficiency, slow response to digital business changes, and lost business opportunity and/or market share. Interconnected enterprises can leverage integrated, yet adaptable, IT-driven business architectures to facilitate real-time decision making, rapid iterative innovation, digital ecosystem development, and new sales engagement and distribution models.

However, change (much less transformation) is never easy. Despite the overwhelming need to revamp traditional enterprise IT architectures, obstacles remain, including:

- **Residual enterprise resistance to offsite IT.** IT buyers continue to express concern about losing control of their IT systems, applications, and data when IT sourcing and IT operations shift from the internal IT department to an external service provider. However, an "all in-house" IT cannot provide the scale, speed, performance, and proximity needed to support complex, composite application development and operations featuring millions of endpoints, enormous volumes of data, and highly distributed access/transport requirements. As organizations leverage 3rd Platform technologies for innovation-driven digital transformation, enterprise IT takes on the new role of an enterprise IT orchestrator or a broker. In this role, the internal IT staff is more aligned with business objectives, coordinating the functioning and ensuring the adaptability of the business-enabling IT architecture.

- **Encouraging a "culture of consumption."** Prior to the 3rd Platform era, developers and tech-savvy line-of-business people had to wait for IT organizations to procure and configure the IT resources needed for internal- or external-facing business functions. When cloud-based solutions became available, IT then had to confront the governance and security issues related to shadow/rogue IT usage. In the 3rd Platform era, the challenge becomes one of socializing the idea of consuming abstracted versions of IT building blocks in an "as a service" model as part of a unified business-enabling IT platform. IT departments have a role to play
here as systems integrators and service brokers that stoke the digital transformation engine with easily consumable, yet secure, IT and application resources.

**ESSENTIAL GUIDANCE**

3rd Platform-enabled digital transformation is not just about IT — servers, storage, datacenter networks, software-defined infrastructure, middleware, and applications. Digital business requires retooling and re-architecting existing business processes as well as the greater use of technology at the digital edge to disrupt markets or avoid being a casualty of more aggressive market disrupters. However, the IT components of DX must be liberated from siloed and centralized traditional enterprise IT frameworks, integrated with externally sourced capabilities, and interconnected into a flexible, technology-centric business fabric that is able to adapt to changing market requirements and expand on demand to pursue new market opportunities.

In the digital economy era, business model disruption is rapid and continuous. Therefore, enterprises need to design their datacenter and digital edge IT environments as well as their network platforms with this in mind. Business processes, applications, and supply chains must move closer to the customers, suppliers, and business partners that need digital interfaces to your business. For this reason, enterprises should adopt an "interconnection first" mindset that optimally positions the digital delivery IT stack to extend out to dispersed (and ever-shifting) edge locations where the customer devices and "smart" device endpoints are. However, the edge is only part of the puzzle. The IOA approach also facilitates flexible placement of, and connectivity to, the back-end internal IT processes that power digital workloads and experiences. Given the increasingly global nature of the digital economy, enterprises need IT architectures that make it easier to access multiregion and/or global market opportunities. This imperative creates an even greater need to integrate various IT components across and between companies into unified innovation-enabling platforms to support "just in time" communities of business value that extend beyond geographic borders and enterprise datacenter DMZs. Next-generation IT architectures must be as dynamic and responsive as the real-time business needs they are designed to serve.

Successful execution of digital transformation requires a rewiring of how IT is delivered and integrated. Platform Equinix solves for optimized data and IT resource placement and streamlines the process of organizing the many connections that need to be made among the people, locations, clouds, and data (and the associated IT systems and endpoint machines and devices) enabling an enterprise to successfully address DX. Platform Equinix also aggregates access to a critical mass of digital business ecosystem partners, including cloud, IT, and network services suppliers, and customers, which are located just a cross-connect away in interconnection-ready datacenter facilities.

Your organization needs a partner positioned to support agile, digital economy-style IT organization and aggregation. Equinix, with its interconnection-first approach, offers physical and virtual proximity to multiple networks, clouds, technology service providers, digital business exchanges, data stores, and other business-enabling capabilities from more than 145 datacenters in 40 strategic metropolitan markets worldwide. Equinix can assist your organization by enabling access to an optimized environment for 3rd Platform-driven innovation, multi-organizational business flows, flexible business model development (and redevelopment), and digital value creation. Interconnected enterprises are well positioned to meet the challenges of the digital economy through improved operational efficiency, enhanced ability to target and execute on new opportunities, and continuous improvement of the customer experience.
See the other white papers in this series to learn more about how:


- Enterprises must focus on developing a data-driven datacenter strategy that accommodates expanded and faster access to external data sources that enhance understanding of marketplaces and internal data sources that deliver value to those marketplaces (see [Rethinking Datacenter and Traditional Edge IT with Interconnection to Meet the Data-Driven Business Challenges of the 3rd Platform Era](https://www.idc.com), IDC white paper #US41146716, January 2017)

- Successful enterprises will redefine the boundaries of the datacenter to encompass increasingly valuable cloud services, external networks, customers, partners, and employees (see [Redefining Datacenter Boundaries for the 3rd Platform](https://www.idc.com), IDC white paper #US41761516, January 2017)
About IDC

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