

## **Technology trends give way to social trends**

2014 will be far less about new technologies and much more about how existing technologies and trends are going to change the workplace and our social lives. That's the word from Richard Firth, serial entrepreneur and CEO of MIP Holdings.

"Every year sees various technology predictions across all industries and sectors. This year, it will be less about the technology and more about the adoption and the social changes. Technology always has unexpected effects: no-one knew that the first answering machines would be used to screen callers."

Firth says that there won't be major changes in the big four tech trends (mobile, cloud computing, big data or social media) in and of themselves this year, but that they are now mature and stable enough to confer considerable advantage on those who saw the shifts coming. "What is going to happen is that companies that determined what to do about these major changes two years ago will be in a very good position this year," he says. "Those who haven't, will struggle."

There are also social and political changes brought about by technology that will be prominent. The major change in the social media landscape recently is not that Facebook bought WhatsApp for its 400m+ users but that people are now far more cautious about sharing things indiscriminately on social media, says Firth.

"The effects of the revelations we had in 2013 of concerted global spying on practically all forms of communications will be felt for a long time to come, both in the workplace and in our personal lives. Many companies are pushing back hard against those technology vendors they feel to be untrustworthy in light of the spying scandal, and users are both taking back their data and demanding better privacy for their online interactions. There will also be more private clouds springing up."

Big Data hardware and software continues to evolve but the real changes will

be with those organisations that find interesting new ways to leverage it.

"There is no need for a technological breakthrough because the technology is already here. It's how you can plug it into your processes and analytics that will make the difference. Success in business today relies on the ability to be flexible and innovate. Leaders – both individuals and the companies they head – are at the top because of their use of out-of-the-box thinking. Almost half of that success rests in their ability to use technology to reach their goals," says Firth. "Success is about using the tools you have at your disposal to achieve the desired outcomes, and technology is today's foundational tool for business."