

Tech is making us super human: where is your cape?

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Johannesburg, South Africa — Aug 15, 2017 — The future beckons... A world where the impossible becomes possible, where the imagined manifests. A world where we metamorphise into super humans. Where man and machine merge, transhumanism becomes a reality and our consciousness expands to immortal status. Will this future world be everything we've hoped it will be?

I have no doubt that our ambitions as a human race will very soon become reality, given the exponential rate of technological advancement. This pace is also fuelled by the intentionality of the business world at large. Everyone is actively exploring. Disruption is inevitable, but to be thwarted as much as possible. KPMG's 2017 Global CEO Outlook* states that 3 out of 4 CEOs say their organisation is aiming to be the disruptor in its' sector. Nothing is impossible. We push ever onwards to new frontiers. And each of these in turn will be replaced with new ambitions as we achieve them.

So what does this mean for each of us as individuals? Are we just along for the ride, sprinting ever faster on the hamster wheel of the modern workplace, plagued with worry that a robot will replace us, endlessly fuelled by caffeine injections before suffering from fundamental adrenal overload and falling off the wheel entirely? As much as we need to have the ability to look ahead, we must temper our glimpses through the looking glass and take stock of the present. We must assess what we have available in our current world. Which it turns out, is a lot.

Here and now in 2017, we have super human powers. We can communicate with and influence millions of people from all parts of the world without ever speaking to them, by virtue of social media. Through virtual reality, we can explore the wonders of the world, famous museums and architectural masterpieces, without ever setting foot in the country where they exist. We can track and trace the provenance of our food from seed to store, with the internet of things and real time analytics. We can diagnose illnesses, in the absence of a doctor, with no medical training whatsoever, through mobile technology and machine learning. And we are increasingly able to predict everything from buying habits to the occurrence of earthquakes with staggering levels of certainty using big data and artificial intelligence.

This removes the cloak of ignorance. We can no longer hide behind the mask of not knowing. Our planet and our societies at large suffer from overwhelming challenges. Levels of pollution are unprecedented. Our planet is fast as risk of becoming a large scale dumping ground. Our water sources are being polluted and plundered. Poverty and hopelessness at scale are something we've grown desensitised to, in the face of so much inequality. Providing quality healthcare for all remains something that eludes us despite multiple interventions.

In their book, *The Solution Revolution*, William D Eggers and Paul MacMillan highlight the fact that the challenges we face in modern society are often too big for governments to tackle alone, due to scarcity of resources and a proliferation of essential services required by citizens. These requirements are also shifting as technology moves the goal posts. Which means if we constantly rely on government alone to solve these problems, our challenges will remain and worsen. What is our insurance policy of the future? A future where our oceans have more plastic than fish and our air strangles us with every breath?

In a world where we have super human capability, it's time for us to become super heroes.

In the battle for a better future for our planet and society, super heroes don't stand alone. They build on the shoulders of those that came before them, combining super powers to produce impacts more profound than ever before. Collaboration is central to unlocking the possibilities, so much so that it is now forms a fundamental part of executive education courses at exclusive schools such as INSEAD. This is because collaboration across the greater economy, including corporates, governments, NGOs, startups, social entrepreneurs and errant genius misfit thinkers leads to magic. As part of this process, creating a shared vision is key to unlocking collaborative superpowers. A picture of the world that each of the participants want to be a part of, and importantly, are prepared to invest in – be it through time, resources or capital. What, fundamentally, are we trying to achieve together? And how do we start? Because, ideas without action are just hot air.

SAP Africa is proud to be sponsoring the first ever SingularityU South Africa Summit. This event will bring together, startups, corporates, NGOs, executives, developers, creatives, strategists and visionaries. We are looking forward to the encounters and experiences that the SingularityU Summit provides the platform for. It is sure to pave the way to impactful new collaborations that #futureproofAfrica.

My question to you is – what do you want to work towards? What is the future you want to create for yourself? What is the world you want to live in? And how can you start... Today.