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5 TECH TAKE-AWAYS FROM THE 2015 BUDGET



The Boardroom
by Eleanor Burns | 18 March 2015

Internet of Things, broadband, renewable energy - the government is embracing technology and realising its economic potential.

Between the jokes tailored to evoke the maximum jeering from backbenchers, Chancellor George Osborne delivered the 2015 Budget.

Kicking off with impressive figures illustrating the economic growth of the UK, Osborne went through the lengthy budget announcing cuts in beer duty, the selling of Lloyds shares worth £9bn and a cut in lifetime pension allowance - all designed as 'one big step to take Britain from austerity to prosperity.'

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James Campanini, VP EMEA at Blue Jeans, commented: "With success of the five year plan to transform digital infrastructure, it's great to hear The Chancellor continues to show commitment to connectivity. With plans to invest up to £600 million to keep Britain ahead, The Chancellor will introduce [ultra-fast broadband](#) to more cities across the UK, invest in free Wi-Fi in public libraries, and ensure internet speeds of 100mbps to all homes. With recent flexible working initiatives in place and a clear cultural shift towards this new way of working, this will only go further to improve connectivity for those in the office and those who work remotely.

"This development will provide greater bandwidth to allow more people to work effectively regardless of location - and even on the go. Having better connectivity means employees have the ability to use tools like video conferencing to hold meetings, events and ultimately stay engaged with their colleagues and customers while not in the office."

2. £40m funding for Internet of Things

The £40 million funding will support research into major challenges, business accelerators and large-scale projects to take the most innovative ideas for using IoT technology to market.

By focusing on public sector transformation, demonstrator projects in health and social care and city-scale applications will show how this new technology can meet the needs of users and deliver those services for less.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said: "From making our transport network more efficient to improving how we monitor our health, investing in the Internet of Things has enormous potential to transform the way we live and work for the better, while generating jobs and growth right across the UK."

Marcus Jewell, Vice President EMEA at Brocade, commented: "It was encouraging to see the Chancellor acknowledge the Internet of Things as the "next stage of the information revolution" in his Budget and commit substantial government spend to support research in the UK. There is no doubt that, over the next few years, the Internet of Things will grow exponentially; changing the Internet from something that we access only when we need it, to something that exists all around us, all of the time and across every aspect of our lives.

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"However, in order to realise its true potential, a strong foundation underpinning these technologies will be just as important for the UK economy as innovation around connected devices. Network investment will be required to build a more flexible and robust platform that can cope the influx of data that the Internet of Things will generate."

3. Technology and economic success go hand in hand

Julian David, CEO of techUK, commented: "Today's Budget announcement demonstrates that tech is essential for ensuring the UK's long-term economic success. The smart use of tech is fundamental for balancing the books, increasing productivity, creating new jobs and including and empowering people across the UK."

"By investing in infrastructure, innovation and entrepreneurship the government is driving growth, not just in tech, but across the whole UK economy. Combined with continued ambition for digital government, today's package strengthens the UK's position as a leading global digital economy."

In regards to innovation, David said: "The UK is well placed to be a global leader in the development of the Internet of Things and the announcement of the £40 million investment will help accelerate the development of new innovative solutions for health, social care and smart cities"

Addressing the announcements made about infrastructure, David commented: "If the UK's communication infrastructure is to remain globally competitive for the long term, it is vital we have a bold vision for the future. Today's 'moonshot' announcement is exactly that and will focus the minds of Industry, policy makers and regulators to think about how we can deliver ultrafast as widely as possible across the UK."

"Today's announcement has put further momentum behind the digitalisation of public services, both at a central and local level. This will be vital for meeting the Chancellor's targets for efficiency savings as well as building world-class public services around the needs of the citizen," David concluded.

4. Government to invest in economic growth outside London

Steven Harrison, lead technologist at Exponential-e, commented: "Delivering real economic growth outside of London, especially in the North, and investing £600m to clear new spectrum for broadband and mobile networks, would demonstrate true Government commitment to our connected economy."

"The realisation that being London-based doesn't define a leading business, mirrors the progress that technology developments such as cloud computing have made in supporting businesses to connect all over the UK and compete on a global stage."

5. Renewable energy pledge signals data centre savings

Zahl Limbuwala, CEO of Romonet, said: "The announcement is interesting and could make the UK a world-leader in tidal energy projects. However, the subsidies needed to get this project going are eye-watering, considerably greater than that for new nuclear. These subsidies are bound to be passed on the end user, emphasising the need for energy efficiency in the data centre sector, both for existing and future builds."

"With energy representing up to 80% of a data centre's costs, cutting this number by any amount can result in huge savings. Investment and design decisions should be driven by this; for instance, how will altering the way in which air intakes operate change the Total Cost of Ownership of the data centre? Indeed, in some cases operational failures have turned out to actually reduce costs and energy use, by revealing systems that were ultimately unnecessary."

"Similarly, data centre power usage should take into account how much of the building will be standing empty. If a data centre never rises above 70% capacity, or if it invests in cooling systems over and above what the servers inside demand, then a large proportion of its energy costs will be spent for little or no actual value. As a result, an organisation looking to reduce its energy bill first needs to look closer to home."

"Alternative energy sources are an essential part of the energy mix but the cost of developing these sources mean the data centre industry must remain fixated on squeezing every last kilowatt hour of efficiency out of their facilities."

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