



You are here: | [Home](#) | Business

Artificial intelligence at work

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Australian Karl Redenbach believes his New York-based company LiveTiles is poised to turn traditional work methods upside down using artificial intelligence (AI). He says the era of digital transformation is over – and the age of intelligent transformation has begun.

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With a background in law, Karl Redenbach was trained to avoid risks. His entrepreneurial spirit, however, convinced him to leave behind a law career and head to London and then New York City with ideas about how to make workplace practices simpler and more efficient.

Redenbach is the co-founder and CEO of LiveTiles, an 'enterprise as a service software company', which claims some of the world's largest brands as customers. In plain English, LiveTiles specialises in helping businesses bring their digital workplace systems onto one screen with easy-to-use drag and drop software.

"We control the chaos of the workplace," Redenbach explains during a conversation in his New York City office.

“We try to simplify the complicated world of businesses. We call LiveTiles ‘intelligent workplace’ software. If you’re using Salesforce or SharePoint – or any other products – we can bring those together into one single pane of glass. Apple and Google have done that for the consumer world but we’re not used to it in business.”

LiveTiles was launched in 2014 by Redenbach and business partner Peter Nguyen-Brown and with a fast statement of intent, listed on the Australian Stock Exchange in 2015. The company’s customers include global brands PepsiCo and Nike and giant government agencies such as the United States Department of Defense.

Artificial intelligence used to reduce workload

A key element of the LiveTiles product is the development and use of AI within workplace software. Redenbach is an evangelist for how AI technology will improve the way employees use their worktime.

“You can talk to the computer and ask for a document and it will find it for you,” he explains. “Artificial intelligence helps us understand what applications you might use and what you might want to do.

“For example, it usually takes about 16 clicks and five minutes to book leave – plus a whole lot of other processes. With AI you simply say ‘I’d like to book leave next Monday from 2pm’ and it is literally done in a few seconds.”

Redenbach adds: “You hear a lot of companies talk about digital transformation but we believe that is old. Digital transformation has already happened. We are now looking at intelligent transformation.”

In 2016, LiveTiles grew its user base by almost 300 per cent globally. The company’s New York City headquarters oversees more than 100 employees in 14 countries with other offices in Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, North Carolina, London, Zurich, Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart. The company announced in late-2017 its plan to partner with the Government of Victoria to create 300 jobs in Geelong, a regional city 75km southwest of Melbourne.

Redenbach jokes that his business is an overnight success “after 17 years of hard work and understanding”. He studied law at Melbourne’s Monash University, was president of the university’s law society, and briefly worked in corporate law after graduation. He honed his business skills managing a band that toured Australia and Asia performing songs by the Spice Girls.

Monash University alumni global links

Redenbach has remained connected to Monash through its alumni network. He has been a member of the university’s alumni council for several years and helped create the Global Discovery Program, an internship that brings Monash students to New York City to visit and meet with US-based alumni and visit the United Nations, MTV, and Bloomberg.

Education is another aspect of the LiveTiles business philosophy. The company has developed a giveaway edutech product for kindergartens and schools that Redenbach says is a two-way street. Called Mosaic, this free product informs LiveTiles developers how schoolchildren engage with technology and AI programs.

“Our great commercial developments have been driven by the education arm,” says Redenbach. “Mosaic is not just corporate social responsibility. We think a business should be involved in education. There is a lot of satisfaction when business is not just making a commercial dollar.

A whole new level of disruption

Engaging with future generations supplies Redenbach with insight into how technology may evolve in the near – and long-term – future. The LiveTiles CEO believes traditional IT, at least IT as businesses currently deploy it, has a limited outlook.

“We are a software company and we don’t have an IT team,” Redenbach says.

Citing companies like Airbnb and Uber that have upended industries, Redenbach adds: “We would argue every company today is a technology company and if not today then they will be tomorrow.”

Workplace technology has made dramatic advances in the past decade but Redenbach sees the next 10 years as even more revolutionary. Leading the way, says Redenbach, will be an expansion of AI that will redesign workplace practices.

“The smartphone didn’t exist 10 years ago but AI is going to provide a whole new level of disruption,” he says. “In the next 50 years, my children will say they can’t believe this generation worked the hours that we did. We came home from work and were on our phones still working into the night.

“In the future, a lot of the mundane tasks will be given to a robot. My kids will only work 20 hours a week. Individuals will have a lot more time for family and friends and won’t have to work as long as we do. My view is optimistic but, ultimately, technology provides more positives than negatives.”

Find out more about [LiveTiles](#).
