

Top 5 AI trends that will give organisations a digital advantage in 2022

 By [Ria Pinto](#)

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Over the past two years since the Covid-19 pandemic started, Africa's economy has contracted by [2.1%](#), and regional growth is expected to be [muted in 2022 compared to 2021](#). Economic recovery and growth are top of mind for countries and many are now realising that accelerated [digital transformation](#) is at the heart of achieving this.



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Forward-thinking leaders, policymakers and organisations are turning to AI – which is helping organisations experience the equivalent of 10 years of growth in less than one year in areas such as e-commerce.

By leveraging emerging technologies like AI, countries can surely drive greater efficiencies, create jobs, enhance competitiveness and productivity.

A recent [IBM report](#) revealed that nearly half of global businesses (43%) accelerated their rollout of AI over the last year as organisations looked to virtual assistants to automate workflows.

Additionally, 80% of companies stated they had plans to roll out some form of automation software over the next 12 months.

The increased use of AI isn't limited to organisations and businesses.

AI is playing a key role in crucial industries such as agriculture. It can help to deliver data analytics and predictive insights to help farmers make better-informed decisions.

This will lead to improved agricultural outputs for smallholder farmers and big agribusiness players – promoting sustainable development and boosting food security.

With that potential in mind, these are the top five AI trends that will give the agricultural sector and organisations a digital advantage in 2022.

1. AI creates a reliable, sustainable future

Consumers, regulators and shareholders are putting greater pressure on companies to make tangible sustainability gains. Climate change and extreme weather events also put a strain on supply chains and business operations.

As these pressures continue to grow in 2022, AI will play a key role in helping businesses achieve sustainability benchmarks through greater measurement, data collection, and carbon accounting, as well as improved predictiveness and greater supply chain resiliency.

2. AI will drastically improve sustainable farming on land by helping farmers to forecast weather conditions

Farmers across Africa have always wrangled with weather – drought, flooding or something in between.

AI and IoT apps such as FarmWeather will help small-holder farmers maximise crop output despite unpredictable weather conditions by providing risk forecasts and crop advice for a 3-4km radius of a farm and will also allow information sharing – including via SMS for farmers without access to the internet or a smartphone.

3. AI will open up horizons for the agriculture ecosystem, allowing farmers to produce more with fewer resources, and consequently to be more efficient, profitable and sustainable

Different producers in the agricultural food chain are faced with the challenge of improving their profitability in harmony with a sustainable and balanced development model.

Technologies such as AI can be used by farmers to gather information about their crops and give them the insights they need to make decisions quickly.

4. AI will help to deliver sustainable aquaculture to help recover the oceans

There are several threats currently facing our oceans. Better allocation of ocean resources – enabled by emerging

technologies – can play a role in making a difference in improving sustainability in aquaculture.

Characterising fish welfare using AI will provide more granular insight into conditions, for example within a salmon cage, by combining information on environmental conditions and fish welfare.

These trends have an enormous potential to improve people's lives through access to better, and more reliable access to goods, services, food and information.

To learn more about how AI is transforming industries ranging from retail to financial services, click here.

5. Businesses reduce costs by applying AI to better predict IT issues – before they happen

In 2021, CIOs were tasked with moving their workforces remotely, managing new types of security concerns as a result, making sense of the explosion of data produced by modern applications, monitoring solutions and increased use of digital channels by employees and consumers.

Businesses applied AI to better predict IT issues, which has led to an area called AIOps.

In 2022, AIOps will allow IT teams to quickly and confidently diagnose problems faster than they could manually, freeing them from laborious, time-intensive tasks to focus on delivering higher-value work for the organisation.

AIOps will also enable these IT teams to identify patterns in data that could ultimately indicate when a potential issue could occur, getting ahead of IT issues before they happen.

Conclusion

For AI to continue to advance in these areas, companies and organisations need to make progress in earning greater consumer trust.

The battle for consumer trust takes place on multiple fronts, from the ability to make AI decisions understandable and explainable to providing consumers with confidence that their personal data is being protected against cyberattacks.

As companies and governments continue to invest in cybersecurity, AI will play an even more crucial role in helping identify and respond to threats more efficiently, as they move towards a “zero trust” approach to further reduce risks.

These AI trends have the potential to create enormous benefits for consumers and will help tackle South Africa's biggest challenges by being more trustworthy, explainable, transparent and fair.

This will ensure that progress made in 2022 will ensure AI's positive impact on us all in the years to come.

ABOUT RIA PINTO

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