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CLOUD REALITIES

CR040

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Alex Lorke Royal Mail

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[00:00:00] I actually like now traveling with Rob because I'm like, Rob, where are we going next? I'm your corporate Sherpa, Dave, do you mean? Yeah. It gives me a sense of security.

Welcome to Cloud Realities, a conversation show exploring the practical and exciting alternate realities that can be unleashed through cloud driven transformation. I'm David Chapman. I'm Sjoukje Zaal, and I'm Rob Kernahan.

So Rob, what are you confused about this week?[00:01:00] It's cryptocurrency, isn't it? I'm confused. Is it a thing or is it not? So on the one hand, you got the legacy financial institutions telling us all not to invest.

It's a fad. And then on the other hand, it's been around for a long time. It clearly has some value to some people. And now the likes of Elon Musk are creating Currencies, and Tesla allowed you to buy parts of the car with Bitcoin for a bit, and things like this. So I'm stuck. Is it a massive Ponzi scheme that's gonna collapse one day and everybody's gonna cry, or is it actually the future of the economy?

And I don't know, and I'm confused by it. I think it's a fair thing to be confused by, and I actually wish I had the answer to that. But I do remember once... I was chatting to somebody, this is gonna sound bad. I apologize for saying this before I even get going, but like the, I was chatting to this guy over a couple of beers and asked him a similar question.

This is about a year and a half ago. And he gave me a very compelling answer as to why it wasn't the Ponzi scheme and that it was good. The only downside to the story is I can't remember what the [00:02:00] answer is. So we remain confused. It sounds like you had my answer there. It was very compelling. I was getting up, Dave's going to give me some insight and then you end with that.

Fred not. There is an answer to it. And maybe someone can enlighten us at some point. But without further ado, though, let's introduce our guest this week. Joining us this week is Alex Lorke, IT Director of Product Engineering at The Royal Mail. Alex, it is great to have you on the show. Why don't you just introduce yourself and just say a little bit about what you do?

Yeah. Hello everybody. So I'm Alex Lorke. I'm the IAT director for product engineering at the YML. I've been with YML for 14 plus years and I'm really passionate about the YML. It's a brand that is, I fell in love with. I thought I was going to join the organization to do, do three years stint and I'm off to the next thing.

And here I am still many years later. And it is an organization that has, I feel really. Proud and passionate about and to work for because it is a very engaging brand. That is something that you can touch and feel and everybody has [00:03:00] something to say about it. So the thing that's really made me stick with the organization is the opportunity to really be a part of building software capability and software product for the organization.

So today I look after a team of around 500 people that built a software product for YML strategic components of the organization are the bits that make us compete and win in the market. And that's from dot com all the way through to the device that the postie holds in their hands when they visit you at the doorstep.

And that also includes two pure play social development shops that Intersoft. And I have the privilege to be on their boards as the, as a non executive director and chair for the organization. So yeah, that's me in a nutshell. Alright, shall we swing into action on the Royal Mail Group? So Alex, why don't you, for the listeners maybe who are outside of the UK and don't know the history of Royal Mail, why don't you give us a bit of background on, such an amazing and long established organisation.

Happy to do so the Royal Mail is an organisation I think we all engage with on a daily basis, whether, You receive [00:04:00] a letter or parcel, whether you walk past a pillow box or a man drives past you. So it's a very engaging brand is something that's kind of part of the fabric of the UK. And I guess as an organization, it's more than 500 years old.

So it's an organization that has evolved with the country. So amazing amount of heritage. Not many organizations can claim that level of depth, right? It goes back to horse and carriage days, and even probably before that. Allegedly it was Henry VIII who birthed the postal service.

And the reason he did it is he wanted to spy on the correspondence between other sort of players in the UK. And so he introduced that so they could then secretly open the mail and read everybody's correspondence. So I don't know whether that's myth and legend or whether there's some truth on it, but so that, that appears to be the heritage of the postal service.

And the Royal Mail has been. On the forefront of an innovation throughout the 500 years tree with introduction of the postcode, for example something that, that, that didn't exist, the the universal service obligation, which is the delivering [00:05:00] an item to anyone in the country for one price to any destination.

And there's something that actually totally empowered poorer or less. It's parts of the country to come together and operate on an equal footing, whether that is through mail or in terms of letters, or whether that's actually sending parcels and packets. And so if I'm a business and I'm allowed to produce, I can still send an item at the same price as someone in central London.

So I'm not disadvantaged. So I said, that's a really important element of actually making the economy circulate, allowing everybody in UK to be equal, which is really important. Yes. It levels the communications playing field, doesn't it? It does and starts to underpin society and bring elements of society together to create like a bigger conversation than there would have been possible before.

Yeah, it was like the first universal internet, but 500 years ago, or anybody could communicate with anybody for the same price. It's a really nice sort of leveling of connecting society story, isn't it? 500 years ago, we. brought society together [00:06:00] through letters. Yeah. And actually the parallel you draw there is, it is really important.

So we, we used to, as an organization, pre privatization to have a postal regulator was specifically there to look after the universal service obligation, which is the same price anywhere, six days a week. And we found that in the early 2000s that our main competition was actually the email and the internet.

It was another. us at the postal organizations or the postal industry at large, it was the telecommunications industry. So as part of the privatization, we also switched regulator. When our regulators part of Ofcom, as a result, we are in the same record as telecommunications organizations. And we find ourselves in the similar regulatory regime and.

considerations of the regulator are more level handed between what it means for us to be secure and connected versus what it means to telecommunications. For me personally, when I joined the organization 15 years ago, this was the first big major transformation I saw the organization go through when really the adoption of email, [00:07:00] the digitalization of the bank statement, all those things were starting to seriously impact.

Letters volumes. So if you go back 20 years ago, the Royal Mail was handling 20 billion items a year. Today, that's 7 billion items. So in the last 20 years, our core letters business has declined by about 60%. And we're forecasting that the letters business will plateau out somewhere around 4 billion.

So there's another 50 percent reduction, which we're likely to experience in the next, five to 10 years. And that's, it's a massive structural change, right? If you look at Any organization that's, that, that's gonna operate at, 20 or 30% of what its used to operate at. And particularly being a fixed asset operator, like we, I, you have to physically move mail through the networks.

No, it's like literally the lifeblood of the network, isn't it? Is items going through it? But I wonder what the pivot here must be into the world of packages and parcels and I suspect. Accelerated by the kind of move [00:08:00] online that the pandemic the pandemic impact hard. Yeah. And I think that brings us to the heart of the transformation.

So we just talked about this decline of the letters volume and the structural change that brings to the organization, which is a cost on play and an automation play for a lot of the things we do in, in, in the letters network. Then you look at the past and the shape of a parcel is very different to the shape of letter.

And so while it's. Parcel sales growth, and we've seen 10 percent plus growth year on year. The pandemic has been insane growth that we were 30, 40 percent growth rates during those two years. But the parcel is a very different shape. So a letter, the customer, my customer for a letter is the doorstep. It's the letter box.

I dropped a letter into and that's like a stateless transaction, almost, isn't it? It's open 24 seven. There's no human interaction. I don't really care who actually in the household is receiving the item. I can walk up the garden pass, drop it in and I'm out again. Really quick in and out parcel.

Completely different experience the past experiences is with the recipient so i need to hand it over [00:09:00] more often than not to a particular person that's a scanning events there's a call interaction so there's a whole user experience and my expectation as a customer is you know i'm gonna i'm gonna you know within a certain time window i'm gonna know when the package is arriving and i'm gonna solve i'm gonna set an expectation around that and i'm gonna plan my day around that so that's very different isn't it to.

My letter is going to arrive tomorrow, and it's just going to drop through the door and I don't actually have to do anything about that. Yes. And that then takes us to this digital aspect of the transformation, which is not only am I switching my network to be targeted towards a person and this interaction, but there's interactions.

digitally enabled because as a recipient, I want to know where is the item? When is it coming? Who's it coming? Who's it being delivered by? Can I change my delivery preference? Say I want to interact via mobile device. I want to interact via my mobile app and that requires a connected digital experience and turn through the supply chain.

And there's been a massive change in that [00:10:00] experience in the last decade. Cause it used to be. The surprise parcel, it's coming. Keep the curtains twitching. Are they here yet? Are they here yet to all interaction? It's come in this time window, the beer bang done. The transaction has become, you were scared to leave your house in case they turned up and ran away again.

But now it's you get this. Much higher level of certainty. So peace of mind and the experience

is so much better and it feels much more centralized around the individual and their experience than centralized around the logistics set up where it used to be. It's definitely massively changed from my perspective.

Yeah, and that changes is really hard to replicate for us as a male organization, as a, as an organization that carries letters. So we're coming from a letters business used to carry passes on. Now we've become all of a sudden your competitions change. Exactly. And so that the pure play courier businesses, he.

Only do parcels then that folks have been optimized this way all the way through and they've been driving the innovation in terms of the user experience, and particularly as some of the digital natives like Amazon [00:11:00] have been really investing very heavily into giving the best, user experience at the doorstep.

For us, it's do that whilst managing the cost out at the same time. So for us it's been a 2 billion, around about 2 billion investment to guess. Our network changed to, to be no longer letters orientated, to be parcel orientated. And the delivery chain from a recipient sorry, from a sender to recipient, which for letters about the seven step process of handling the item through delivery offices, mail centers compared to parcels of optimized delivery network, which is a three.

To maximum force that activity, I aggregating straight into super hub down to delivery networks or delivery offices and then to the recipient. So that's 50 percent less handling. So in terms of cost of sending. 2 million parcels a day. Did you handle it seven times or do you handle it four times? And then the investment required to give the digital experience in terms of the connectivity between the machineries that's reading the labels and [00:12:00] notifying out, to customers where the item is and then the visibility in the final mile where the item is in, routing through traffic with Posty and having the item in their bag, et cetera, et cetera. So we're connecting all that up into a digital experience. So then allows you on your mobile phone to see, oh yeah Posty, Alex is coming, in two hours to see me at my doorstep, that is a complete different capability to where we come from.

And that's the convergence though, which we've seen over the last decade, which is GPS integrated with OT integrated with IT allowing you to give a unified experience, isn't it? It's like that has definitely matured, which makes it, I wouldn't say easy, but more practical to integrate to get all the information together.

Just as a note on this, Alex, before you answer that very good question. Converged technologies is one of Rob's favorite things. Like literally, I knew this was coming. As soon as I asked the question, Oh, I know what Dave's going to say, we can be stood like in the street trying to get an [00:13:00] Uber and Rob is holding his phone in his hand, holding Uber up to me going, look, you can see the car coming.

It's converged technology in action. I'm like, I know Rob, but the irony of it is he can't use Uber. So when he's no good at using it, we stood there and there was a taxi rank over there. So I'm like, let's just go and get a taxi. Cause there's one right there. And Rob's no, I can't because I'm, I've got Uber and then I'm going, but you haven't even notified a driver yet.

They don't know that they need to come. It's converged. Technology's not that good yet. I'm passionate about converged technology and I want to use it. Dave, we'll leave it there. All right. We'll, Alex, sorry about No, that's alright. And it's actually really good com comparison to, to where we are as a business where the P D a, which we call the postal digital assistant, right?

It's the mobile phone, just as a rugged device. It is really the lifeblood and the heart and soul of the post out in the street, right? So that's our channel of communication into our frontline colleagues. There's about [00:14:00] 80,000 of them, as already said. We're delivering around about 40 million letters.

2 million parcels every day to 32 million addresses in the UK. And so the logistics challenge, it's very similar to an Uber, to do the organization in terms of sending, connecting consumers with taxis. So for us, it's connecting mail items with our recipients. And so we have actually quite a significant technical.

challenge arraigned both from a network perspective in terms of, my postie needs to be connected to to connect a network. If they're in the outer Hebrides or in a London the challenges are different, the Hebrides is it's network coverage in a central London, that's the urban footprint of high rise, that stops the GPS accuracy.

But increasingly what we do with the Postie device, it's a, it's for us, it's an Android device that runs applications that we built for our colleagues using the Microsoft architecture and runs as. Yeah, behind the scenes. So that's the footprint. It's a dot net framework, and we absolutely exploit the capabilities of the device [00:15:00] in order to give the best experience.

What has been the challenges in the technical evolution into being able to do that, Alex, from what was probably, Fairly substantial logistics support, even in the sort of postal iteration of the Royal Mail versus the digital platform and package iteration of the Royal Mail. What's that journey been like from a tech perspective?

Yeah, it's been immense. Just in whilst I've been here, we about six years ago, we started to seriously see see some challenges in terms of the capability of the device, which means Device capability is a constraining factor, and we're constantly looking at how far can we push a device?

But so the last change we made about two, two years ago now prior to that the previous device we had, we're seriously running out of memory, we're seriously running out of processing and compute power just on the device. So we were constantly optimizing just the application footprint on the device and stop memory leakages, et cetera to just kill [00:16:00] the user experience.

So that was a period where we were pushing really hard and replicating and market features that we desperately needed to give a gift to our front end colleagues and our consumers, but we were constantly being constrained since then, luckily touch wood. So we've the more recent generation of device that we've got in the field at the moment, which is, it's just, just a year and a half old has got the memory and the capacity the processing power, the screen size.

So it's, that's. That's very akin to a modern mobile device. And we are on, I think we're at the moment we're working on and that will open up some additional capability and functionality. So feeling good in terms of the technical foundation, it must have brought about a very different set of conversations, though, because all of a sudden from a tech and digital implementation perspective, there must be a much bigger conversation around customer and employee experience, for example, than there was probably even Pre pandemic, I would think, and I asked the question one [00:17:00] because I'm interested to hear it from a Royal Mail perspective.

But also, I think experience led transformation can often be the most powerful

transformation an organization can go through because it immediately starts to deliver value to both your customer and your internal employees. And therefore, not only is it good to Upgrade that experience, but also that then starts to lead to stronger prioritization of digital change, and I'm guessing increased productivity, particularly from an employee perspective.

Yeah, a couple of things. There's a there's an interesting story. So during the last autumn strike action during that period when there was a lot of stuff and availability to get product fulfilled we as managers and back office staff were helping out in the front line. And a couple of my engineers were out delivering.

And they felt that the process of how you load parcels in the van wasn't really that helpful. For someone who doesn't really [00:18:00] know the geography and doesn't do this as a daily task, right? So supposed to who do this every day, they know all their dresses on the top of the head.

They look at the past and go these ones need to be the grinning of my round. These ones at the end, I'll just chuck it all in the van and I'm off. I go. I imagine you as a. As a software developer, I'm having to do that. The logistics challenge of taking 200 passes out on route, which you don't know where you're going is really challenging.

The guys were like I'm not having this. They literally go, okay, there's a better way of doing this. I'm not going to build a little mini app that allows me to scan the items into segments and then I'll load them according to that. I went back in the office the next day. Did the prototype a week later, we had rolled out a a mini app that, that allowed users to build a manifest that was zone based loading into the van.

And that was the, was instantly adopted because, all of us, sort of casual managers, workers were. Absolutely loving this feature and functionality when yes, we want that happy days. And that's become, one of the capabilities and I've been used by 80, 000 colleagues on a daily basis.[00:19:00]

That's classic engineer thinking, though, isn't it? It's like the see a problem. I'm going to automate this and make it easier for the user. Also doing that job builds massive empathy with what The, the day to day post he has to do. So through that experience, everybody's got a better experience.

So negative to very positive. And I really like the way that digitally engineering a solution in a couple of days and it works. That is cloud native approaches in action, isn't it? Business problem realized, proof point. Rollout scale, and it shows you the power of user driven design, doesn't it?

Yeah. Yeah, it does. And does, and one, one of the things we've done as a direct action, fo falling from the strike action is all our engineers who come on into the teams will have the opportunity to go up with the post e b out on the walk. It just experienced that.

And it just brings that intimacy in terms of moveable solutions that we know are, they're being used in the frontline. Having said that, I'd like to do more of that. I'd like to be to get even closer to my frontline colleagues in [00:20:00] the way we set our process. So we still have a lot of sort of project processes that kind of get in the way.

And so for us, one of the strategic intents is to be more product development orientated in the way we set up our delivery chain and our change chain. So But yeah, I think we're on the right trajectory there. So Alex, we just went through that use case of building up in a week. Was there anything on that cloud native journey that sticks out for you?

Major point of learning something that you went? Oh no, we need to do this differently or a

significant experience that sort of Accelerated everything in the mind's eye. Yeah. So for me as a as a leader and as a technology leader, as a is a quite defining mo moment in my career that I consider quite pivotal.

So in 2015 and 2016, so we were looking at at go to market strategies to compete against the marketplaces from a logistics perspective. Won't bo you with the details, but. But we felt that we weren't able to deliver the step change in our digital capability required to compete effectively building that in house.

So we chose to acquire digital pure play businesses, [00:21:00] StoreFeed and Intersoft, in fairly short succession to bring different capability, one's more oriented towards marketplace integration, the other one more around multi carrier integration for logistics and complex supply chains. And when I engaged with organizations that were entrepreneurial in mindset, quite small and nimble operators and.

And store feeder itself was born in the cloud and on Azure. My is reopened after, Korea at that stage of nearly 15, 20 years of just being a more commercial orientated technology leader to actually get it back into the craft of building applications, the software. Alex, that, that really resonates with me because I had very similar.

Epiphany with this stuff. And in a lot of ways it was even more basic. So I was at the time I was working in government. I was in DWP and I was actually getting much more into like business change. And as you say, commercial leadership. And frankly, I've lost a lot of love. for I. T. Because [00:22:00] it was all just about SAP deployments.

And yes, it is like supplier management by not built right. Building stuff was bad, right? So there was just nothing creative happening in it. Yeah, totally. So yeah, I was at the I was getting really good at being, a lawyer and commercial negotiator, project manager writing PowerPoint slides.

So yeah, so that wasn't really actually that fulfilling. A great, my moment was, and this, it just sounds ridiculously trivial, but like my wife had I hadn't bothered with even iPhones and stuff like that. And my wife got an iPhone four. So that dates exactly when this was, it was just on the iPhone four came out and.

I picked up the iPhone and my wife was like, Oh, can you set that up for me? And I'm like, Oh, I'd like deep intake of breath. Okay, I really don't want to do this because setting computers up at the time was just like the most awful experience. So that's my mindset going in, as you say, like my day to day [00:23:00] job, even though I was in it, it was actually way more about supply and management and stuff like that.

So I sat down with the iPhone 4. And I opened the mail application and it was connecting the iPhone 4 to Gmail was my moment of like light bulb. It was like, Oh my God, like I can't, I literally can't believe that was just worked. Was it, Oh my God, I can't believe I didn't have to do anything other than click two buttons and just how architecturally, how different that was, it's like from that point onwards, I'm like I'm back on, it's I'm suddenly fascinated by technology again. Yeah, exactly. And so I had that epiphany working with the subsidiaries and the challenge that we were tasked to do, which was at the time we created those new brands or channel was just called click and drop. Which was a twinkle in our eyes in, in 2015 and the the CTO and managing director of the Storfeater subsidiary and myself we created this vision around building this application and we took it to market in 13 weeks.

I was an MVP. It was fledgling products, but we were working to the, all the [00:24:00] principles of. Cloud first, continuous delivery, trial and learn, put the customer in the middle.

These were the cultural values that store feeder and intersoft, just living and breathing and that product over that channel with click and drop over the last eight years we've gone from.

With this subsidiary from a team of 10 people sitting in the back in a really crappy warehouse to 100 people organization that's building and continually evolving one of our most critical channels in our, e commerce and marketplace seller space and with the customers loving it, they use this application because they have to because it's Royal Maryland's monopolistic is it's because there's choice that want to use it to love it.

They give it. Great ratings for the application, and it's such a different experience. So look, a fascinating story from the days of highwaymen and coaching horses all the way through to modern delivery chains, product orientation, and Rob's favorite thing. Converged technology is [00:25:00] just a fascinating historical story.

I wonder, Alex, just to maybe bring our conversation to a bit of a close today. Pitches into the future. What are you guys looking at? Next in terms of taking such an amazing organization into even more modern times. Yeah, so I think there's some things around. So when you look at it from a business perspective so we've recently started drone based delivery into the outer edges of the network where actually for safety reasons we take passes to islands, remote islands, for example and during poor weather that, our colleagues are Physical safety is at risk, or sometimes that means actually mail doesn't go through for a couple of weeks if there's really poor weather conditions and imagine there's a there's an emergency with regards to someone falling ill or medicines are in required.

So we launched launched a drone based delivery into those regions. Or geographies. And it's something that we're we think will probably grow in our usage, but is unlikely to come into the core network. So if you look at [00:26:00] quite a number of organizations who are playing and trialing drone based delivery, whether that's drones on the ground vehicles or airborne vehicles, I think the interaction with the wider social fabric is quite challenging, particularly in a urban context.

That's an interesting area. There's a lot of future gazing around drone based delivery and then certain environments that are quite well controllable environments. I think we'll see more of that. And of course, automation under the roof is also one where there's continued innovation that's not as visible.

To maybe to the recipient and the public eye, but in terms of the investment we take in our super hubs, which highly automated massive infrastructures that basically allow us to sort tens of thousands of items every minute. Those are the kind of scale factors that allow us to deliver a reliable digital service to, to, to our customers.

Sjoukje, what have you been looking at this week? [00:27:00] So each week I do some research on related ideas in transformation and tech, and this week I thought we should take a look at the impact of AI and machine learning on logistics operations in post offices. So AI and machine learning are really changing the logistics operations of post offices on a worldwide scale, increasing efficiency, reducing the cost and improving the customer experience.

So predictive maintenance, route optimization, and customer service are just a few examples. A couple of areas where AI and ML are making a huge impact, but these technologies are also being used to detect fraudulent activities, which will improve the security and maintain a high level of trust with customers.

So a question. Do you think that AI and machine learning really has the potential to change

the logistics industry, enabling faster and more accurate delivery of packages and mail? Yeah, so this is really quite [00:28:00] an important topic. So AI, I think, so I'll come to I think AI is a little bit maybe opaque, but machine learning is Really important topic for us.

And an area where we've actually taken quite a bit of investment. So one part is to give you one problem space, which is our lorries, which are trunking, parcels and letters between mail centers and delivery offices. You see them in the dark of nights, you're traveling out the motorway.

So it's a quite a significant network that will operate. And when there's traffic and congestion when highway agencies closed down motorways have to reroute and you'd say that's not a problem, I'll just check on my Google maps or my my Apple maps and I'll take a diversion.

Oh, don't use Apple maps. They'll get lost. Use Google maps. Yeah. He always tells me to have an opinion. There's an opinion. There are other windows to provide the service. I hasten to add. But of course, what none of those do, they are, they're not optimized for HDB traffic, right? So you get routed through roads that have low bridges and you have lorries smashing into railway lines.

Now the cost of smashing into a railway line is I think something like [00:29:00] 10, 000 pounds a minute. Oh God, that expensive. Absolutely. Holy moly. Yes. So you do not want to do that. You do not want your lorry to drive into a railway bridge. Oh. And, so that's crazy. But even if you question somewhere else, you, that mail is just stuck.

And so we saw the problem space, particularly during periods of high activity from the high risk agency in terms of making, road closures during the night, which is when we drive a lot of traffic and then you miss you miss the connections into air traffic or other things and suddenly a whole bunch of mail doesn't get to the customer.

I'll call it your service targets and then we'll get fined. I said, so what we did, we run some machine learning on on a historical route. So we will collect up all the footprints the GPS footprint from Rory's because they're connected through telematics systems and all that data is sucked up into GCP.

Our GCP platform, and then we run machine learning algorithms that say to go from A to B, over the last six months, which are the most effective routes. If this one's [00:30:00] closed down, which is the next most efficient route to go through. And you have the confidence that those routes which have been traveled often and are the short, shortest, fastest routes are also safe because they have been accident free.

And that was a really easy way for us to just basically use historical data to do our own route optimization. That's specific for lorries. Just in that one little case study, you can see the potential of what you've been looking at. Yeah, definitely. Yeah. And I never realized that the normal routes weren't optimized for those lorries.

No, they don't. Yeah, exactly. So yeah, the early days off of Google, we have some lovely photographs of a van stuck in, between the roads and on the bridges and all sorts of stuff. Oh, pretty. So where I live. Is one of the most hit railway bridges in Britain, rather humorously. And I have actually seen an articulated lorry drive straight into it.

And it does cause utter bedlam and chaos on the road network. Trains have to stop everything. So yeah, getting that that's gotta be a major plus. And also bad marketing, right? It happens all the time. [00:31:00] Everybody takes a photo and the company's names down the side of the truck. Isn't it? Yeah, that's not ideal.

Amazing conversation today, Alex. Thank you so much for your time and insight. It's been great talking to you. You're welcome. Now we end every episode of this podcast by asking our guest. what they're excited about doing next. And that could be, it's Friday, got a great restaurant booked tonight, looking forward to going there.

Or it could be something that you're looking forward to in your professional life. So Alex, what are you looking forward to do next? It definitely isn't my professional life. I enjoy my professional life. Oh, I really look forward to is is to go wing foiling. Hopefully this weekend, although the wind's not looking that great.

So last year I picked up wing foiling as a new Is it? Yeah, so it's basically, it's a, it's like a stubby winds surfboard or surfboard with a hydrofoil underneath it. And you carry a inflatable wing with you that then propels you up on, on onto the hydrofoil. Is that the one you have to bounce up and down on and it gets going, or is that a different one?

If the wind's not strong enough, then that's a [00:32:00] way of. pumping yourself up onto the hydrofoil, which requires very little effort to keep you going. But getting out of the water onto the hydrofoil, that requires that bit of effort. Is it as difficult as it looks? It looks immensely difficult to me.

I, it's hard to gauge. So I, I think that getting up on the hydrofoil is quite hard. Once you're up and you've got the basic balance it's actually very easy. Having said that the progression is much, much faster than it was on, on windsurfing. I'm the second season, I'm already doing jumps and aerial stuff.

And that took me about 10, 15 years on the windsurf board. So I think the progression is much, much faster on it. So it's probably great fun. That is a brilliant one. That's a brilliant one. Look, enjoy your weekend. Thank you. A huge thanks to our guests this week. Alex, thank you so much for being on the show.

Thanks to our fabulous producer Marcel, our sound and editing wizards, Ben and Louis, and of course, to all of our listeners.

We're on LinkedIn and X, Dave Chapman, Rob Kernahan, and Sjoukje Zaal. Feel free to follow or connect with us and please get in touch if you have any comments or ideas for the show. And of course, if you haven't already done that, rate and subscribe to our podcast.

See you in another reality next week

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About Capgemini

Capgemini is a global leader in partnering with companies to transform and manage their business by harnessing the power of technology. The Group is guided every day by its purpose of unleashing human energy through technology for an inclusive and sustainable future. It is a responsible and diverse organization of nearly 350,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong 55-year heritage and deep industry expertise, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to address the entire breadth of their business needs, from strategy and design to operations, fueled by the fast evolving and innovative world of cloud, data, AI, connectivity, software, digital engineering, and platforms. The Group reported in 2022 global revenues of €22 billion.

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