INTERVIEW

The Digital Foundation: How Infrastructure is Powering Africa's Technology Transformation



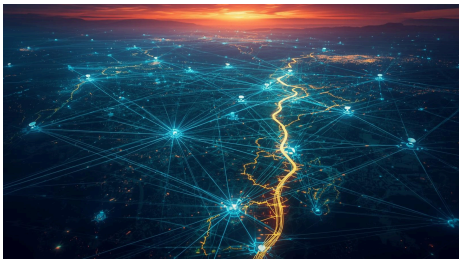
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The Company

Layer3

Layer3 is a Nigerian technology company delivering the digital infrastructure, cloud, cybersecurity, connectivity and managed technology services that businesses need to operate, grow and compete in an increasingly digital economy.



1. Africa's technology landscape has evolved significantly over the last decade. From your perspective as CTO of Layer3, what are the most important technology shifts currently redefining how organisations operate and compete?

One of the biggest changes is that technology has moved from being a support function to becoming central to how businesses compete.

Ten years ago, many organisations were primarily concerned with having reliable connectivity, functioning applications and an IT environment that supported day-to-day operations. Today, the conversation is much broader. Businesses are thinking about cloud, automation, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, Big data, digital customer experiences and how quickly they can bring new products to market.

Cloud adoption is obviously a major part of that shift because it has changed the way organisations think about infrastructure.

Companies no longer want to spend months provisioning technology before they can launch something. They expect infrastructure to be available when they need it and to scale with demand.

We are also seeing much greater attention being paid to where data sits, how it is protected and who has control over critical digital infrastructure. That conversation around sovereignty is becoming increasingly important across Africa.

Perhaps the biggest change, however, is the pace of expectation. Customers expect services to work instantly, businesses expect systems to remain available almost continuously, technology teams are therefore under pressure to build environments that are not only innovative, but resilient, secure and adaptable.

2. Digital transformation requires more than adopting new technologies; it requires a strong and reliable foundation. What role does digital infrastructure play in enabling organisations to successfully adopt technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence and data analytics?

Infrastructure is what makes digital transformation real. It is very easy to talk about AI, cloud or analytics at a strategic level, but all of those technologies depend on something underneath them.

They depend on computing capacity, networks, storage, security, data centres and increasingly sophisticated systems for moving and processing data.

If that foundation is weak, the technology sitting on top of it will eventually expose those weaknesses. For example, an organisation may want to use real-time analytics, but if information is sitting across disconnected systems or the network cannot reliably move that data between locations, the value of the analytics platform is immediately reduced.

The same applies to AI. You cannot become AI-ready simply by subscribing to an AI platform. You need reliable infrastructure, usable data, sufficient compute, security controls and the ability to integrate AI into existing systems.

That is why we encourage organisations to think about infrastructure as part of their business strategy rather than something that sits separately within the IT department. The quality of that foundation increasingly determines how quickly a company can innovate.



3. As enterprises demand greater performance, scalability and reliability from their technology environments, how are infrastructure requirements changing and what should organisations consider when building future-ready digital ecosystems?

The biggest shift is that infrastructure can no longer be designed only for the requirements a company has today. Businesses are changing too quickly.

Organisations may suddenly need to support a new digital product, a larger customer base, an AI workload or expansion into another market. Their infrastructure has to be capable of responding without forcing them to rebuild everything from scratch. That means architecture is becoming much more important.

Companies need to think about scalability, redundancy, interoperability, cybersecurity and resilience from the beginning. They also need to avoid becoming unnecessarily dependent on a single technology or provider where that dependence limits their ability to evolve.

Hybrid environments will continue to be important. For some organisations, the right answer will be public cloud. For others, it may be private cloud, local cloud, colocation or infrastructure within their own environment. In many cases it will be a combination.

The important thing is having architecture that allows those environments to work together effectively.

Future-ready infrastructure is less about choosing one particular technology and more about creating an environment that gives the organisation room to change.

4. Connectivity has become a critical enabler of business growth, particularly as organisations rely on distributed teams, cloud platforms and real-time digital services. How do you see the evolution of connectivity shaping the future of African enterprises?

Connectivity is no longer just about linking devices; it's rather becoming part of the operating fabric that drives Africa's digital economy.

As applications, infrastructure and people become more distributed, the network connecting those environments becomes increasingly important. A business may have its employees in multiple locations, applications running in different cloud applications running in different cloud environments, data sitting in a local data centre and customers accessing its services from across several countries.

All of that has to work as one environment.
So the conversation is moving beyond simply asking whether a business has internet access. The questions now are around latency, resilience, redundancy, security and how intelligently traffic can move between different environments.

For African businesses, this is particularly important because the continent is becoming more digitally connected while also producing far more digital services locally.

Over time, I think we will see significantly more infrastructure being built closer to where African users and businesses actually operate. That will improve performance, reduce unnecessary dependence on distant infrastructure and make it easier for companies to deliver reliable digital services at scale.



5. Data has become one of the most valuable assets for organisations, but it also introduces new considerations around security, compliance and sovereignty. How should African businesses approach building secure and trusted digital environments?

The first step is recognizing that security cannot be treated as something that is added after infrastructure has already been designed. It has to be built into the environment from the beginning.

Organisations need to understand what data they hold, where that data is located, who has access to it and what would happen if a particular system or provider became unavailable.

That sounds simple, but many businesses still do not have complete visibility across their technology environments. There is also a growing sovereignty dimension to this conversation. African organisations are beginning to ask more questions about where their information is stored, which jurisdictions govern that information and how much control they retain over their technology infrastructure.

That does not mean every workload must remain within a country's borders. It means organisations should make deliberate decisions about where different workloads and datasets belong.

Ultimately, trust comes from visibility and control. Businesses should know how their information is protected, where it resides, how it moves and how quickly they can respond when something goes wrong.

6. The growth of artificial intelligence is creating new opportunities for businesses across industries, but AI adoption requires significant technology capability. What infrastructure investments will organisations need to make to become truly AI-ready?

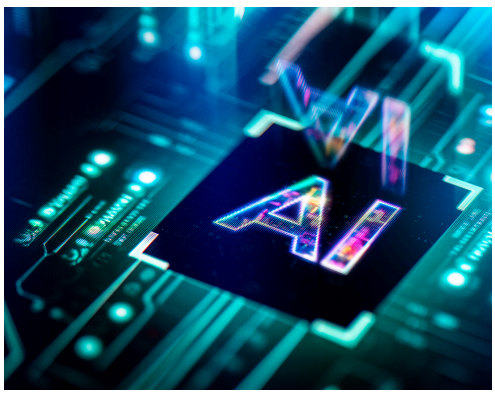
The most important thing is to understand that AI readiness is broader than buying GPUs or deploying a large language model. Compute is important, particularly as AI workloads become more demanding, but data readiness is equally important.

Many organisations already have large amounts of valuable information, but it is often scattered across emails, spreadsheets, applications, databases and individual departments. Before AI can create meaningful value, that information has to become more accessible, structured and governed.

Organisations will also need infrastructure that can support the movement and processing of much larger volumes of data. That includes compute, storage, high-performance connectivity and increasingly sophisticated security controls.

Then there is integration. The real value of AI will come when it becomes connected to business processes rather than operating as a separate tool that employees occasionally use.

For most organisations, becoming AI-ready will therefore be a journey. The companies that do it well will first strengthen their data and infrastructure foundations and then build increasingly sophisticated AI capabilities on top of them.



7. No single organisation can build Africa's digital future alone. How important are partnerships between connectivity providers, data centre operators, cloud providers and technology companies in creating a stronger digital ecosystem across the continent?

Partnerships are essential. The technology environment has simply become too interconnected for any organisation to operate completely independently.

A cloud provider depends on data centres. Data centres depend on power and connectivity. Software companies depend on infrastructure. Enterprises depend on all of those layers working together.

So the strength of the ecosystem ultimately depends on how well those different parts connect. For Africa, collaboration is particularly important because we are still building many of the platforms, infrastructure networks and technical capabilities that will support the next generation of digital businesses.

At Layer3, we see partnerships as more than simply commercial relationships. The ecosystem becomes stronger when companies share infrastructure, technical expertise, routes to market, training opportunities and access to customers.

If African technology companies can build deeper relationships with one another, we create more opportunities for businesses across the continent to build and scale using infrastructure that understands the realities of their markets.



8. Looking ahead, what do you believe will be the defining technology trends shaping Africa's digital transformation over the next three to five years and what advice would you give business and technology leaders preparing for this future?

AI will obviously be one of the defining technologies, but I think the more interesting story will be how deeply it becomes embedded into everyday business operations. We will move beyond organisations simply experimenting with AI tools to companies redesigning workflows, products and customer experiences around intelligent systems.

At the same time, we will see continued growth in cloud adoption, cybersecurity investment, local data infrastructure and demand for greater control over where critical workloads are hosted. Digital sovereignty will also become a much bigger conversation. Governments and businesses will increasingly think about the infrastructure that supports their economies, where their data resides and how dependent they are on technology infrastructure outside the continent.

Another important trend will be the growth of African technology ecosystems themselves. We will see more local infrastructure providers, developers, software companies, cloud businesses and technology partners building solutions specifically for African markets. My advice to business leaders is not to chase every technology trend. Start with the capability you want your organisation to have.

Ask what your customers will expect from you in three years. Ask what your infrastructure would need to support if your business doubled in size. Ask whether your data is usable, whether your systems are resilient and whether your technology architecture gives you room to move.

The organisations that will be best positioned for the next phase of Africa's digital transformation will not necessarily be the ones adopting the most technology. They will be the ones building the strongest foundations for what comes next.