

Devoteam Fusion Outlook 2026

How do you tell a genuine technological shift from another moment of noise? And what can it cost organisations and society to misread the difference?

Hélder Dias Ribeiro · September 2026

There is a version of scepticism that deserves respect. Blockchain was going to rewrite the financial system. The metaverse was going to be where we would work. Years later, they are niche technologies. Those who doubted were right. Distrusting promises of rapid, total change is not cynicism, it is common sense. But doubt, stretched beyond the evidence, stops being prudence. Debating whether the change is real has become the most respectable way to postpone it.

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What separates the two cases is not the ambition of the promise. It is the structure of the return. Blockchain and the metaverse needed the world to change first. They needed counterparties, shared standards, everyone in the same room, even a virtual one. They were bets on a future world.

Artificial intelligence, on the other hand, pays whoever uses it, alone, today. It does not wait for a standard, a partner or a regulator. That is why it went through everything in a few years, from cost cutting to content creation. Hence a test: does this technology pay those who adopt first, even alone, or only once everyone adopts?

There is a second test, which I learned from the inside: changes that reward early adopters spread without a mandate. When I started finding sensitive information in chatbots used on personal licences, and internal tools built in days on vibe-coding platforms, with company data and no security, I realised I was no longer driving adoption. I was chasing it. If it has to be forced, I am sceptical. If it has to be governed, it is real.

The question then becomes a different one: not whether it is real, but how far it goes. The cost of getting it wrong is asymmetric. Erring on the side of too much costs money, and sometimes more than money: a wasted pilot, or data where it should not be. Erring on the side of too little costs compound interest: the advantage builds up while others reflect, leaders become followers without noticing, and some followers become memories. The bill is not immediate, and that is what makes postponing comfortable.

In society, the same asymmetry, but with less time to react. Jobs and consumer habits are changing faster than we can keep up. The chatbot is becoming the new shop window, with paid advertising behind it, and visibility starts to be bought. Europe, which regulated before it built, has to do both at a speed it has never operated at. Portugal has done this before, from Multibanco to Via Verde. What matters is not the speed of the technology, it is the gap between it and the speed of the institutions that govern us. That gap is what society pays for, in a generation whose skills expire before there is anywhere to renew them.

That said, I remain optimistic, because of the same mechanism: a technology that pays whoever uses it, alone, lowers the barrier for anyone who wants to build. One person today does what used to take the knowledge of a whole team. But none of this is guaranteed. Optimism cannot stay in the comfort of prediction; it has to become a to-do list, shared between companies, governments and each of us.

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