Tomorrow's Affairs
Analysis of today
Assessment of tomorrow

By: Elise Quevedo

A look into the future with 6G

Next week, I head over to London Tech Week to explore the cutting edge of innovation, but today, I want to take a moment to look further ahead. Not just to 2026 or 2027 but to the world of 2030 and beyond.

Because while most people are still getting used to 5G, the tech world is already building the next generation of 6G.

Now, I know what you might be thinking, "We just got 5G. Isn't it too soon?" But let me take you back just five years. It was the early days of the pandemic.

The world was panicking, and amid that chaos, some people were so confused and fearful of technology that they blamed 5G for the spread of COVID-19. They even went so far as to burn down 5G towers. Wild, right?

That wasn't centuries ago. That was 2020. Fast-forward to today. The same cycle is bound to repeat itself unless we start now by educating, preparing, and inspiring conversations about what 6G truly means.

Because five years go by in the blink of an eye. And the groundwork for 6G is already being laid.

First, what is 6G?

6G, the sixth generation of mobile networks, promises speeds up to 100 times faster than 5G, if we can even imagine that, latency reduced to near-zero, and the ability to connect to entire ecosystems. From AI-powered cities to real-time holographic communications.

On top of faster downloads, we're talking about a redefinition of what's possible in a connected world. Something we may have only seen on The Simpsons or Star Trek.

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Think of remote surgeries performed in real-time with full sensory feedback and fully immersive AR/VR environments accessible from anywhere on Earth.

Even communication systems that make today's digital divide a distant memory. That's the world 6G is aiming to build. Clearly, it won't happen overnight, and it certainly won't happen smoothly without proactive work.

Who's Leading the 6G Charge?

Let's break it down by region. The race for 6G is already underway, and it's fascinating to watch.

Anything that may look too futuristic or too good to be true, I keep an eye on and watch in fascination behind the scenes before I give my opinion.

At the end of the day, we cannot give a valid opinion without gathering some facts first!

United States

In the US, Qualcomm is heavily investing in next-gen wireless R&D, while the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has opened up spectrum for experimental use and already approved equipment tests by Nokia and T-Mobile.

But overall, the pace is slower than some of its global counterparts. Why?

Bureaucracy, fragmentation, and a lack of central coordination. I'm not going to say it, but come on, turn on the news, right?

It does not take a genius to understand that the US is currently undergoing a lot of changes, and whereas some areas may be thriving, others are in limbo.

China

China, on the other hand, is taking a centralised, aggressive approach. Is that even a surprise? The government launched a 6G task force back in 2019, yes, before 5G was even

fully deployed.

Huawei and ZTE were already testing 6G-related hardware, and in 2020, China launched the world's first experimental 6G satellite.

They see this as a national priority, and they're putting their full weight behind it. That's what you call strategic vision.

Having collaborated with Chinese brands myself, visited headquarters in Shenzhen, and seen some behind-the-scenes operations, I can confirm that they don't joke around when it comes to R&D development and working on solutions before any other country does.

United Kingdom

Closer to home, the UK is catching up. The government has already pledged millions into 6G R&D through the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.

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Meanwhile, companies like Nokia and Ericsson are partnering with UK institutions to ensure Europe doesn't fall behind.

The UK Parliament is also beginning to weigh the policy implications early, which is a promising development.

However, there are challenges, including political distractions, funding allocation, and, yes, a lingering public scepticism about new technology, which brings me back to the start. And oh, how I wish one day I could write about the UK without any buts or howevers!

The 5G Backlash, will history repeat itself?

Who can forget the disinformation campaigns that plagued 5G's rollout? From health fears to conspiracy theories, it became a masterclass in how poor communication can derail progress and take us backward instead of forward.

Telco companies weren't ready to combat this. They focused on engineering and ignored a key factor, human perception. In a world that runs on social media? That was a costly mistake.

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With 6G, we have a second chance. We can start now by laying the foundation for public understanding and trust. We can be transparent about what 6G is and isn't. We can showcase how it will empower (not endanger) people's lives.

And we can work with governments, educators, and tech thought leaders to tell that story well before the towers go up and get burnt down like they did in 2020.

The Human Opportunity

6G is a potential equaliser. It could connect rural communities that have long been left behind. It could provide real-time educational opportunities in developing countries.

It could power life-saving tools in disaster zones. The power of this technology lies in how we use it to bring people closer together.

As I've said before and will remind you from

time to time, are we designing this future for all or just the privileged few? Now is the time to make that decision, not in 2030 when it's already live.

Looking Forward

I'll be keeping a close eye on the development of 6G over the next few years. From policy debates in Westminster to R&D labs in California and test sites in Guangzhou.

If we've learned anything from the last evolution, it's that innovation without education creates confusion, and confusion breeds fear.

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I want to believe that we will rise to the challenge of making this a global equalizer rather than another tool for division. I sometimes wonder if we are too eager to build the next "big thing" before deploying what is currently available to those who don't have access yet.

But that is the never-ending question that will always be on our minds. Why are we in such a rush to create and develop the next when so many are still far behind?

And please do not get me wrong, I clearly love technology and innovation and how far the world has evolved in such a short period of time.

I feel brands often overlook the human side of technology and that the users' and consumers' voices need to be heard. Over the next few years, I'll continue to dive into the world of 6G, exploring its breakthroughs, controversies, and human impact.

P.S. I encourage you to follow my fellow Tomorrow's Affairs independent columnists, who continue to inspire me with their voices and opinions on today's world topics.

And to the Tomorrow's Affairs team, thank you for letting us share our voices on your platform. We couldn't do it without your amazing work behind the scenes.