Technology for customer experience



DIGITAL REPORT 2021

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Nicolas Fortineau C

LIBERTY GLOBAL: Technology for customer experience

Liberty Global's *Nicolas Fortineau* and *David Wagenborg* discuss the telco firm's focus on the customer and how it's risen to the challenge of COVID-19

> s one of the world's leading converged video, broadband and communications companies, Liberty Global is investing in infrastructure to empower customers to make the most of the digital revolution. Operating in seven European countries under brands such as Virgin Media and Telenet, the company is combining fixed and mobile assets to offer a true converged product to its customers and boosting speeds across the board. "We are pushing out gigabit broadband speeds pretty much across all our portfolio," says Nicolas Fortineau, Director in-home Connectivity Products. "We've put a lot of effort into our network, spearheading a roadmap that will get us to the stage where we will be able to offer 10G speeds over our fixed networks across Europe."



The scale of the company's ambition is backed up by its culture, as David Wagenborg, Vice President Connectivity Products and Business Markets, explains. "It's a very entrepreneurial space. There are constantly new ways to organise, new ways to develop, and new developments themselves. Liberty Global has been instrumental in really challenging the incumbents in several markets, and therefore gaining the position that it has today."

That privileged position is based in part on a reputation for reliability. "We are one of the few operators who invest as much money back into the network and into the further development of our portfolio as we do – in some cases almost double "It all leads to one very simple objective: deliver the absolute best possible customer experience"

NICOLAS FORTINEAU PRODUCT DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIVITY PLATFORMS, LIBERTY GLOBAL

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NICOLAS FORTINEAU

TITLE: PRODUCT DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIVITY PLATFORMS

INDUSTRY: TELECOMMUNICATIONS

LOCATION: THE RANDSTAD

Nicolas Fortineau is Product Director of Connectivity Platforms at Liberty Global and his work involves redefining Meaning of connectivity. His product portfolio reaches over 10 million households across seven countries for residential and SoHo customers.

Customer-centric at heart, Nicolas uses the best technology (including Artificial Intelligence, Cloud, 5G and WiFi) to bring lifeenhancing services to customers, improving their connectivity. Nicolas has been working in Media, Technology and Telecommunication companies for over 12 years; living and working in Europe, Asia, the US and Africa.

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the amount of what our competitors are investing," says Wagenborg. Because of that investment, Liberty Global is able to offer facilities such as device management to further improve the customer experience. "What we effectively have is a cloud where all of our customers' connected devices – everything from your mobile phone, to your doorbell, to your

"We have the ambition to make sure that, first of all, we are fully digital ourselves, but also that we can help our customers become digital-first"

DAVID WAGENBORG VICE PRESIDENT CONNECTIVITY PRODUCTS AND BUSINESS MARKETS, LIBERTY GLOBAL

DAVID WAGENBORG

TITLE: VICE PRESIDENT CONNECTIVITY PRODUCTS AND BUSINESS MARKETS

INDUSTRY: TELECOMMUNICATIONS

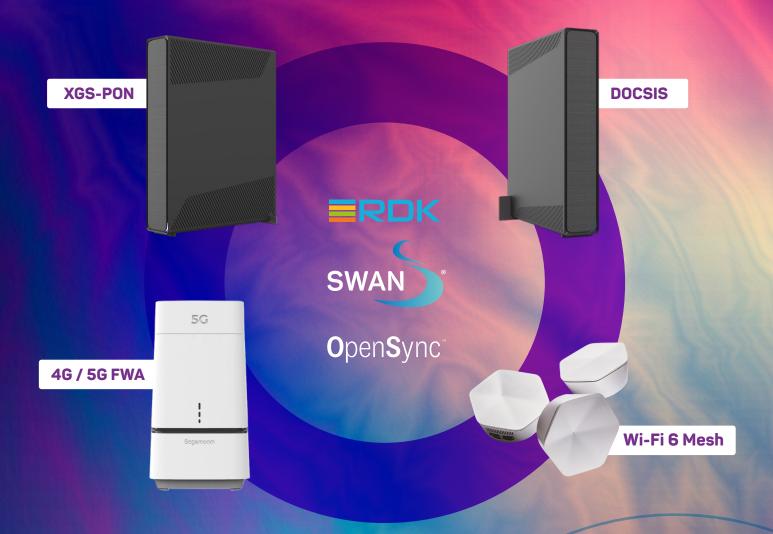
LOCATION: AMSTERDAM

David is overseeing **Connectivity and B2B** developments within Liberty Global. driving the strategic deployment and agenda for consumer platforms, services and experiences, as well as enabling Liberty Global business markets. Previously David has held roles in product marketing within Liberty Global, Vodafone-Ziggo, UPC and BT Global Services. His mantra? XECU Do not regret!

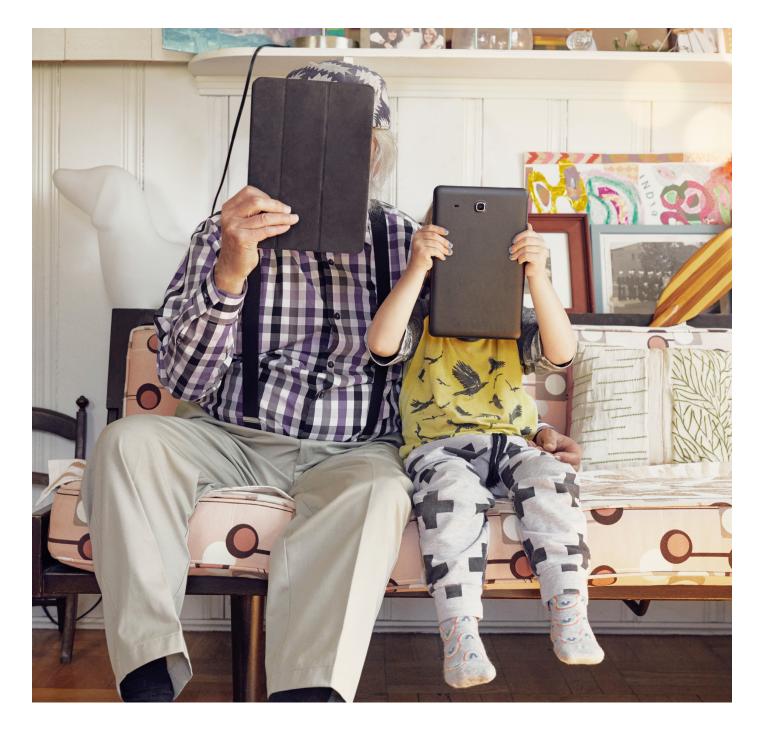
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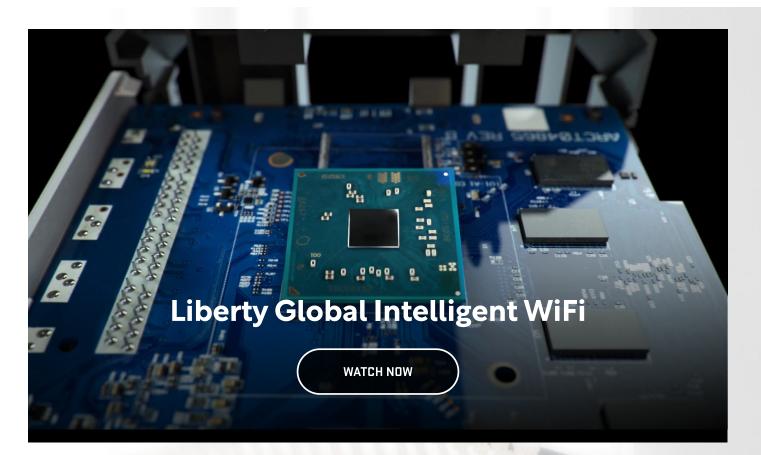


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TV – are managed and optimised in real time to ensure that you always get the best out of the connectivity solution," says Fortineau.

Conceptually, the cloud is of huge importance to the company's offering. "Connect Cloud, which is the internal name, is effectively the technical enabler that we use to power all new features, functionality and services above and beyond pure speed," says Fortineau. "The cloud is effectively a suite of microservices, each enabling a very specific feature set." For consumers, that might include voice services or adaptive wifi, while also presenting an opportunity to increase their cyber security. "Our customers often feel that cyberspace is a bit of a jungle. What we do is offer two types of solutions. On one hand this involves preventing cyber attacks on your personal devices by putting a security layer on top





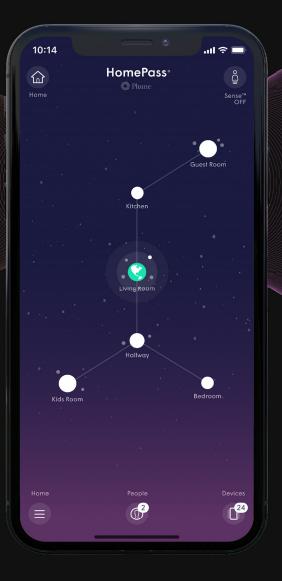


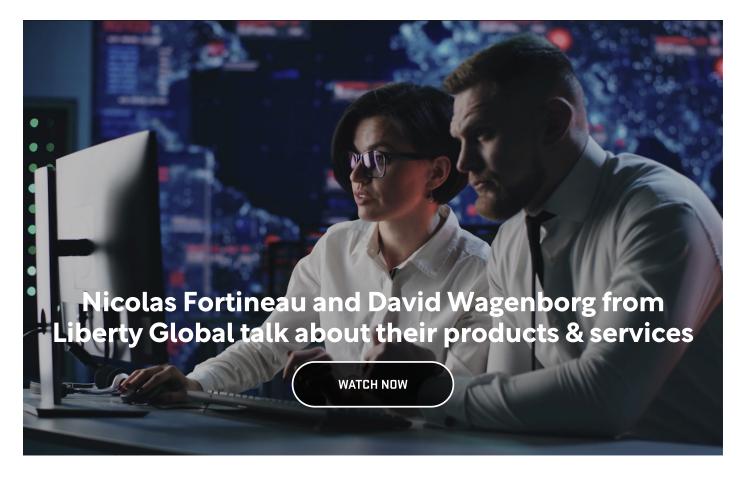


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of the device cloud. We combine that with tools that allow you to protect your family in terms of curating content, but also cyber bullying. It's all about helping people with their digital wellness."

"We all need absolutely pristine 100% reliable connectivity"

DAVID WAGENBORG VICE PRESIDENT CONNECTIVITY PRODUCTS AND BUSINESS MARKETS, LIBERTY GLOBAL Liberty Global also makes extensive use of AI, for instance in its adaptive wifi microservice. "That leverages artificial intelligence and cloud-based machine learning to track changing patterns in the way you use your devices. Whether it's your phone, your tablet, or even your doorbell, all these connected devices can benefit from real time optimisation to ensure that they remain connected at the same time."

The company has an extensive partner network facilitating its ecosystem. "We rely on unique expertise in every part of our connectivity Holy Trinity," says Fortineau. "For instance, we have bestin-class hardware and networking, from Sercomm, Sagemcom and Commscope, which ensures that customers get the best connectivity wherever they are. We also have best-in-class cloud services. Here, Plume has been highly instrumental

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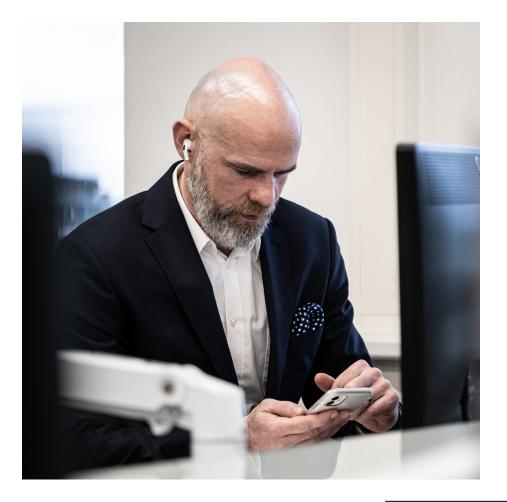


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The Connectivity Cockpit THE FULL CONNECTED CUSTOMER SOLUTION

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"It's paramount to have the best partners and vendors in their respective areas. We, as an ISP, would not be able to build the patchwork of services we have without them"

> NICOLAS FORTINEAU PRODUCT DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIVITY PLATFORMS, LIBERTY GLOBAL

on our journey to build our adaptive wifi microservices and enable the digital services we offer, as well as Epam, which has been working very closely with us on building the overall Connect Cloud infrastructure." Fortineau reiterates the importance of its partners in enabling its projects. "It's paramount to have the best partners and vendors in their respective areas. We, as an ISP, would not be able to build the patchwork of services we have without them."

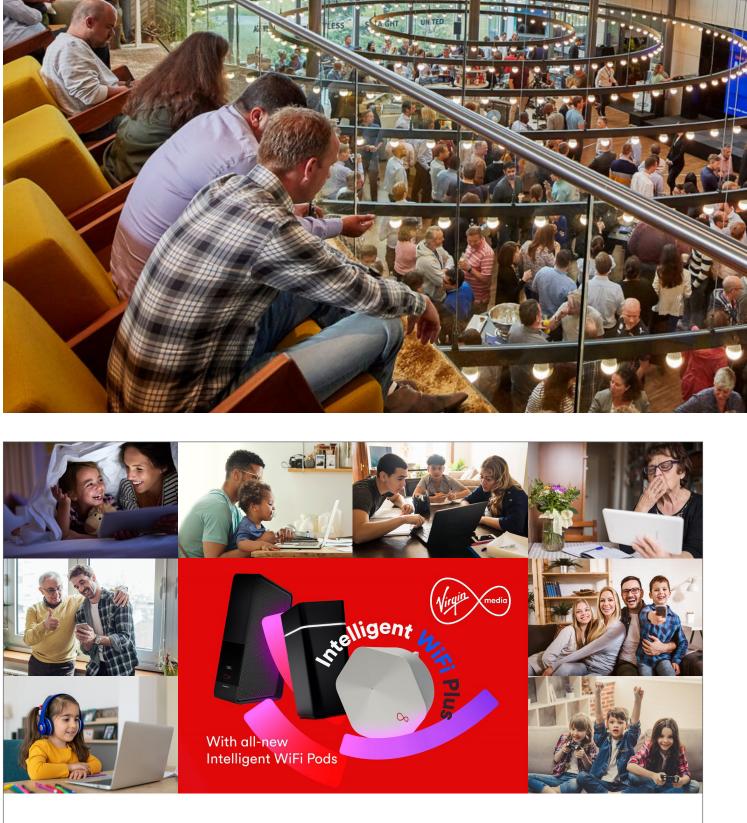
The company's offerings, and its emphasis on reliability, have only become more important thanks to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Companies such as Liberty Global have been the lifeblood keeping companies running while offices have shut, and it recognises the importance of the role it has to play. "If you look at how we live on a day to day

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basis in the new normal of COVID, while I am talking to you, my daughter is on Zoom with her school and my wife is doing a video conference upstairs," says Fortineau. "We all need absolutely pristine 100% reliable connectivity, more than ever." The company was well placed to rise to that challenge, as Wagenborg explains. "It's accelerated the need for elements that we already had on our roadmap. What we saw was a desire for mobile backup alongside smart wifi – both of which we had scheduled already for quite some time."

Looking ahead, the pandemic has not deviated Liberty Global from its mission to further improve speeds in its networks, as well as continuing with the rollout of 5G. It's equality cognizant of its responsibilities in the sustainability space, as Fortineau describes. "We have different initiatives that are helping us contribute to the greater good. From a connectivity perspective, we've imposed a rule on ourselves that all the hardware we deliver to customers is going to transition to only using recyclable plastic, as well as making sure that we send you only the stuff that you need. It's important that, across the industry, we think about our businesses in the greenest possible way."

It's also evolving the way it presents to customers. "We're close to the next step whereby we move towards becoming a full digital service provider," says Wagenborg. "We have the ambition to make sure that, first of all, we are fully digital ourselves, but also that we can help our customers become digital-first." Fortineau concurs, adding that "it all leads to one very simple objective: deliver the absolute best possible customer experience. That is paramount to everything we do." **O**





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