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Stantec lead design engineer Dan Causley looks at advances in technology and their role in boosting productivity in the water sector

post-war sci-fi films and school playgrounds but also with modern-day economists, scientists, humanitarians and engineers among others. Even some politicians seem to understand the significance of the saying.

There is little doubt that they are coming, and in many cases they have arrived. A natural response to this is to draw the human brain into perhaps primitive behaviour where, if a potential threat is identified and we do

Even Professor Steven Hawking, one of the most respected minds of the 20th century, is on record as stating that artificial intelligence could destroy civilisation, saying:

echnology

There are multiple challenges facing the adoption of technology, including ethical decisions involving altering behaviours, DNA manipulation, cyber security etc. Currently, though, the single biggest threat to humanity is not the robot or technology taking jobs it is climate change. Only by adopting and embracing new technology will we have any chance of countering it. Maybe this literal burning platform will give technological advances the digital catapult required.

## **Culture shift**

want humans to do anyway, and with technological advancements a wider range of jobs will arise. The rate at which new careers and services are emerging, creating new jobs and roles, appears at present to be rapidly increasing, not slowing.

In some sectors, including medicine, education and professional services, technology has raised productivity as well as allowing easier access to information.

Similarly, the accelerating pace of communication has revolutionised most knowledge-based industries. Obvious US examples include tech start-ups generating mind-bogglingly large businesses from ideas originally developed in universities or even ucation and research prestige, combined with engineering expertise, needs to be drawn upon to bridge that link between idea and thriving business, generating a wider range of occupations.

UK water companies need to embrace the culture shift. W

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