

Singularity University invites John Sanei to panel

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

15 Nov 2017

John Sanei, business innovation strategist, trend specialist, futurist and author of South African bestseller *What's your moonshot?*, has been invited to join Singularity University's panel of global speakers.

The panel includes some of the world's top minds in exponential technologies, global grand challenges, entrepreneurship and organisational innovation, among the likes of Peter Diamandis, co-founder and chairman of Singularity University; Ray Kurzweil, co-founder and chancellor; Anousheh Ansari, electronics and computer engineer, entrepreneur and the first female space tourist; Anja Boisen, professor and head of Nanoprobes; Neil Jacobstein, chairman of the artificial intelligence and robotics track in the Singularity University research group; and [many others](#), according to a release sent to Bizcommunity.

Sanei is honoured to be included on the list of innovators and futurists creating and decoding the fourth industrial revolution.

He will work with SU on its growth strategies to help expand the education of exponential technologies and how these will affect humanity, and ultimately solve the earth's grand challenges. "Technology is disrupting our world as we know it, turning it upside-down and allowing for the possibility of solving global grand challenges," says Sanei.

He adds that having Digital Neo Cortexes imbedded into our brains is less than two decades away which will elevate and transform humanity as we know it – besides the exponential advances that are bringing access to free energy, free communication and free transportation – we are set for an extremely abundant future.

I asked him how it feels to be the first South African to join the Singularity University panel, more about how the convergence of exponential technologies will create massive disruptions and why he believes free energy is at the core of the global grand challenges, and so much more...



John Sanei

■ **First of all, congratulations! How does it feel to be the first South African to join the Singularity University panel?**

It's an incredible privilege to be selected as the first Singularity University (SU) faculty member from South Africa. It's also a dream come true, as I've been following Peter Deamandis' work, and Singularity University for the past five years.

■ **What does this entail?**

I am included in SU's workshops and think-tanks that seek solutions to global challenges through technology and innovation. Through these interactions, I have direct access to over 200 of the world's most inspiring thought leaders. Additionally, SU hosts in excess of 100 seminars annually, around the world. I will be speaking at some of these.

■ **What do you plan to speak about?**

Understanding how our psychology, whether it's our own internal dialogue or company culture, is influenced by our perception of the future; and how we can best prepare for that future. I combine this with the contextualisation and categorisation of the trends and mega trends of the future. These can be as varied as the potential global impact of exponential technologies, through to skincare trends of the future. I examine strategy and transformation, and highlight the most important "big questions" that need to be addressed.

▣ *What's the biggest trend you predict for 2018?*

I don't think there is one big trend you can focus on. I'd say the convergence of exponential technologies will create massive disruptions. Exponential technologies are described by SU as "those that are rapidly accelerating and shaping major industries and all aspects of our lives." These include artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality, data science, digital biology, robotics, and many more. Underpinning these technologies is quantum computing, which is a billion times faster, consumes less energy and a fraction of the size of current computers.

▣ *Where do you foresee technology taking us in the next 5 to 10 years?*

Technological democratisation is where we are headed. Technology will become cheaper and take grip of every aspect of our lives. AI will become the new electricity. Its impact on an evolutionary scale will be comparable to the effect electricity had on society. AI will add intelligence to everything, like electricity brought power to our world and sparked the second industrial revolution. Through AI, everything around us will become intelligent and think for us, to the point where ambient intelligence (Aml) will pervade our lives.

▣ *Which of the global grand challenges SU seeks to solve, do you believe is of utmost priority and why?*

The global grand challenges focus on energy, communications, transportation, education, entertainment and medical tech, among others. Key among these, however, is the energy challenge.

The provisioning of free energy enables access to education, the ability to grow our own food, the opportunity to desalinate water. Therefore, free energy is at the core of the global grand challenges, and the ripple effect will allow progress to be made in all other focus areas.



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▣ *What do you love most about your career?*

I love teaching people how to be architects of the future, as opposed to victims. With technology changing at an exponential rate, I enjoy the challenge of curating these changes and bringing them into conferences and boardrooms for all to understand.

▣ *What has been your most noteworthy learning in this space?*

It has to be Diamandis' explanation of the '6 Ds' of tech disruption. He states that the exponential growth cycle of disruptive digital technologies follows six key steps. Every organisation that plans to innovate and disrupt in the new digital economy should embrace this roadmap for rapid growth and development through technology-led innovation.

According to Diamandis, when an industry becomes **digitised**, it experiences the same degree of exponential growth witnessed in computing.

However, the initial stages of digitisation can be **deceptive**, as growth is initially slow and few believe that this new technology will materially impact the sector.

That growth rate accelerates, though, and this new exponential technology **disrupts** the industry by creating entirely new markets.

This leads to **demonetisation** as money leaves the industry because technology makes everything cheaper, often to the point of being free.

What follows is 'dematerialisation', where physical products are removed from the industry and replaced by digital products, often incorporated in a user's smartphone, and finally **democratisation** happens because everyone gains

access to a truly digitised product or service, once only accessible to those with either money or power.

It's a pattern already emerging in many industries, most notably transportation and communications.

Google Glass is a prime example of this framework. It's currently in the deceptive stage. Many have written off the concept, but it's going to make a massive resurgence, with the potential to disrupt the trillion-dollar screen industry. The same happened with digital cameras, which ultimately led to the death of Kodak.

To ensure your organisation doesn't follow Kodak into the annals of business history, and the footnotes of business school literature about what not to do, then use the 6 Ds to leverage the potential of exponential technology, rather than fall victim to its awesome power.

■ ***What are you currently reading/listening to for work?***

A podcast called [How I Built This with Guy Raz](#) about people who have built some of the biggest businesses in the world. I also read a lot of SU's posts about the future, and search YouTube for the latest exponential technologies.

■ ***Tell us something about yourself not generally known.***

My favourite thing to do is walk or run in forests with my dog.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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