Press Release

DE-CIX's Technology Predictions 2026: The Emotion AI Paradox, the AI-driven industry revolution, and the Digital Infrastructure Underpinning It All

Frankfurt (Germany), 4 November 2025 – The coming year will see AI push deeper into everyday life, but with some major caveats. From emotionally intelligent banking assistants capable of detecting frustration in a customer's voice, to connected ambulances transmitting live video and patient data, these advances promise faster, more personal, and potentially even life-saving services – but they will also demand digital infrastructure that can deliver reliable, secure, low-latency connectivity. That's according to DE-CIX, the world's leading Internet Exchange operator, which today published its technology outlook for 2026.

Trend 1: Banking on the Emotion AI Paradox
In financial services, 2026 will bring two seismic shifts. A new wave of emotionally adaptive AI promises more natural customer interactions, with systems able to detect stress, hesitation, or frustration in real time. This is a market now forecast to reach USD 9 billion by 2030. At the same time, the US Open Banking rule comes into force, requiring banks to share account data securely via standardized APIs. This combination of emotionally intelligent AI and embedded finance will accelerate innovation across fintechs and third-party platforms, but will also invite tighter regulatory scrutiny. Europe's AI Act classifies Emotion AI as a "high-risk" technology, which may result in a regulatory paradox: more AI data but potentially less freedom to use it. Sovereign interconnection will be needed to handle sensitive financial, biometric, and emotional data.

Trend 2: Real-Time Medicine and "Care Bots"
AI in healthcare has been around for years, but in 2026 it will get a shot in the arm. From hospital-connected ambulances streaming high-resolution video, to AI-controlled traffic systems that clear routes for emergency vehicles, 2026 will see healthcare step firmly into the era of real-time, AI-powered intervention. Patient data from wearables and AI-backed electronic health records will reach doctors before arrival, accelerating treatment decisions and improving outcomes. Governments and hospitals are already moving test cases into large-scale programs, fueling a healthcare connectivity market expected to grow from USD 95.3 billion in 2024 to USD 362.7 billion by 2030 – a leap underpinned by 5G, beyond 5G (B5G), and satellite networks.

Trend 3: Agentic AI Goes Mainstream in Manufacturing
In 2026, agentic AI will graduate from the factory floor to orchestrate entire industrial processes, from predictive maintenance and quality control to fully automated production chains. AI-enabled 3D printing will accelerate personalization, enabling mass production of customized goods. This aligns with the shift toward re-shoring and hyper-localized micro-factories, which reduce supply chain risks and carbon footprints by bringing manufacturing closer to customers. Even NASA is exploring autonomous 3D printing facilities on the Moon, to

construct habitats and landing pads from local regolith – an extreme example of how AI-driven, location-agnostic production could reshape the future of industry.

Preparing for the AI-driven industry revolution with AI-Ready Infrastructure
As AI embeds itself into industries from banking to healthcare, the decisive factor for success will not be algorithms alone, but the infrastructure that connects them. Ultra-low latency, secure data exchange, and seamless integration of fiber, mobile, and satellite networks will be critical to ensure services perform instantly and reliably. In 2026, demand for edge processing and micro data centers will accelerate as businesses push capabilities closer to data sources, creating interconnected urban and industrial hubs where data can be exchanged in real time.

For DE-CIX, this means innovation in interconnection. “As businesses push capabilities closer to data sources, micro data centers will proliferate across urban and industrial landscapes,” says Ivo Ivanov, CEO of DE-CIX. “Orchestration of fiber, mobile, and satellite networks in an interconnected mesh will be essential to ensure reach everywhere. Innovative interconnection solutions at Internet Exchanges – from cloud and AI routing to exclusive private environments of selected partners – give companies sovereignty, control, and high-performance connectivity for every AI use case.”

With its recently launched AI-IX concept adding to its portfolio of innovative enterprise-grade interconnection use-cases, DE-CIX offers secure, high-performance access to AI workloads, enabling companies to build sovereign AI infrastructure and bespoke closed user groups separated from the public Internet.

As agentic AI embeds itself into every industry, the demand for edge interconnection, distributed GPU clusters, and dynamic orchestration will accelerate in 2026, and interconnection will be the foundation on which the next generation of AI-driven business models is built.

For a more information, visit https://www.de-cix.net/en/resources/articles/de-cixs-technology-predictions-2026

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About DE-CIX
DE-CIX, pronounced DEE-KICKS [dˈiː-kˈɪks], is the world’s leading operator of Internet Exchanges (IXs). Founded in 1995, the company is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2025. DE-CIX offers its interconnection services in 60 locations in Europe, Africa, North and South America, the Middle East, and Asia. Today, accessible from data centers in over 600 cities world-wide, DE-CIX interconnects thousands of network operators (carriers), Internet service providers (ISPs), content providers and enterprise networks from more than 100 countries, and offers peering, cloud and AI connectivity, and other interconnection services. DE-CIX Frankfurt is one of the largest Internet Exchanges in the world, with a data volume of over 45 Exabytes per year (as of 2024) and close to 1100 connected networks. Close to 250 colleagues from over 35 different nations form the foundation of the DE-CIX success story in Germany and around the world. Since the beginning of the commercial Internet, DE-CIX has had a decisive influence – in a range of leading global bodies, such as the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) – on co-defining guiding principles for the Internet of the present and the future. As the operator of critical IT infrastructure, DE-CIX bears a great responsibility for the seamless, fast, and secure data exchange between people, enterprises, and organizations at its locations around the globe.
Further information at www.de-cix.net

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