



The Organised WORLD

BIRGIT GEBHARDT // Trend expert

Today she left her home office for a meeting in person – unlike the previous three critical days of the project when she met the team via her avatar... What will everyday life in agencies be like in the future? In a fictitious story, trend expert Birgit Gebhardt accompanies her hero Jeanne through a very normal working day in the year 2037.

J

Jeanne opened her eyes.

Woken up by flashing lights and whirring sounds, Jeanne opened her eyes. The bed rose up and a waft of coffee filled her nostrils. Her personal robot greeted her with an encouraging machine-like grin and showed her the outfit that he had laid out for her, put together from her fashion flat-rate. She suddenly remembered about the presentation meeting and dashed into the bathroom. Her nervousness vanished when she saw the bio-readings that appeared on the mirror after she had been to the toilet: everything was fine, in the green zone, almost blue. She would even have enough time for her muesli. She read the most important news on her bathroom mirror while she showered. Her two kids were already sitting at the breakfast table and being served muesli, which contained genetically and hormonally balanced supplements, by their robot. "Look, I've given him a plait!" cooed Lilli, pointing at his knotted antennae. "Darling, I think he needs to be able to move his sensors otherwise he'll roll over your toys!" Jeanne hadn't even finished her sentence when Ben jumped up with a heroic look on his face and promptly destroyed his sister's handiwork. But luckily the little monster robot performed one of its happy dances, which always amused Lilli no end. While he danced with her to her wardrobe to slowly manoeuvre her in the direction of school, the family's free time windows were synchronised, signalling 'Family Time' from 5 pm until 10 pm that night. Jeanne's joy at being able to spend some time with the children was met with complaints from Ben, who would have preferred to play with his friend Arno.

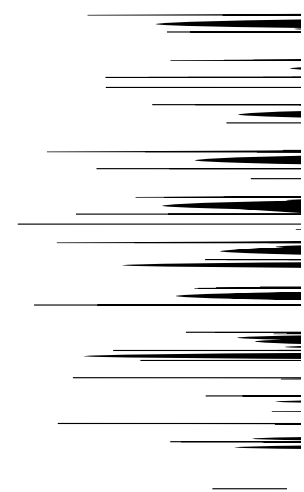
She promised that she would make it up to him another time, turned on the app that would help her keep an eye on her kids throughout the day, kissed them on the cheek and set her virtual assistant the task of coming up with activity suggestions for their free time together. In return, she received today's access codes and the latest update on the client who she would have to convince in today's meeting. The chip under the skin on her wrist started flashing. It was time to leave.

For this presentation she would have to leave her homebase, instead of – like in the last three days during the critical end phase – meeting the others in her team as an avatar. When it came to the most important meetings, everyone always tried to be physically present because sitting together in the same room results in a better group dynamic than working together via holograms or on mega-screens. Then she coordinated the final details with Rahild and Torben on the car's windscreen, for which each of their virtual assistants had provided improvement suggestions. "My virtual assistant has found out that yellow was already used as the background colour on their campaigns five years ago!" called out Torben. "Is that good or bad?" asked Rahild. Colour psychology actually fell into Jeanne's remit and while she was still getting annoyed at her virtual assistant, which apparently hadn't gone back far enough into the campaign history, he promptly sent her social media data proving how well the campaign was received back then and in particular that the colour scheme of yellow with light blue was posted everywhere and printed onto everything but T-shirts and pillowcases.

"Why didn't you tell me that earlier?" Jeanne asked her virtual assistant. "We could have given the whole thing a real retro theme!" "Torben's bot was only able to hack into the client data showing that last night. Which meant I could only start with the colour research early this morning," answered her virtual assistant, sending a cooling impulse to her wrists. "Okay, well that's fine too," said Rahild. "It doesn't have to be retro, seeing as we not only have yellow and light-blue but also burgundy. We'll stick with our idea and the colours and now know what kind of an impact it will have. One could argue that these are no longer background colours, but simply colour codes that will work well." While they were still working on their arguments, the results of the first evaluation arrived via Rahild's virtual assistant. She was delighted about the positive feedback from the last 48 hours, which almost filled an entire radar chart. "Proposition and draft corroborated with fresh data! What more could we ask for?" said a delighted Torben. Only Jeanne was starting to feel more and more uneasy. "Does that mean that our draft is out there before the client has approved it?" "Not really. I only showed it to a few Early Adopter forums," said Rahild, trying to calm her down. "Yes, but they're the multipliers!" "But they had to accept a two-week block before they were allowed to vote, okay?" Jeanne wanted to object that the evaluation wasn't representative at all, but she decided against it. It would only get her poor ratings from Rahild and Torben if she were the sceptic on the team. She promptly sensed another cooling impulse on her wrists and started to calm down.

The car dropped her off on the park side of the headquarters, where cafés, restaurants and co-working spaces welcomed the visitors on the ground floor and mezzanine with its terraces and greenery-filled loggias. While all three of them passed through the subtly concealed entrance gates, Torben suddenly fell behind. He absently stared straight ahead, obviously having just received a live broadcast on his contact lenses. "I have to leave now; my son has been involved in some kind of fight on the schoolyard.

When



I need to sort it out, I'll catch you up!" He took a seat in one of the touchdown niches, rewinding the course of events to find out exactly what had happened. Like Jeanne, he was a single parent and his younger son Paul knew exactly how to take advantage of Torben's guilt. Even during their project collaboration there had been constant interruptions because Torben thought he had to intervene for the benefit of his son. The result was that Paul's school achievements were downgraded due to his lack of social competence and Torben was becoming more and more of a helicopter parent.

So Jeanne and Rahild were left to head to the meeting alone, passing by atriums, conference rooms and creative and testing labs, as their navigation system helpfully informed them. At the entrance to the media room they were welcomed by an older, athletic-looking gentleman made of actual flesh and blood. The two young women were surprised. It was very rare to be welcomed by a real person these days. The data comparison revealed that Mr Winter is the personal assistant of Ms Lahore, the decision-maker representing the client for whom they would be giving their presentation today. An important appointment meant that she unfortunately had to leave early for Chicago. "But she's going to try to watch the important sections and join in the discussion," explained Mr Winter, who told everyone they could call him Kai, and invited them to take a seat on high stools in the middle of the room.

A robot with a mini drinks machine attached to his front offered espresso, energy drinks or coconut water and while Rahild apologised for Torben's lateness, Jeanne admired the media room. These days there were transmission screens and holography simulations in almost every team and conference room, but in this cylinder, which only received light from above, it was possi-



THE GROUNDBREAKING INVENTION OF THE NANNY AND HOUSEHOLD ROBOT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 2020S WAS, AND STILL IS, A TRUE BLESSING FOR SINGLE MOTHERS AND FATHERS. WITHOUT ITS PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE, I WOULD HAVE GONE CRAZY A LONG TIME AGO.

He absently stared straight ahead, obviously having just received a live broadcast on his contact lenses.



ble to immerse yourself in any background scenery. When Torben finally showed up, Jeanne, Rahild and Kai were just walking through the project stages, which were displayed step by step on the wall like an obstacle course. Hanging like the sword of Damocles above the door that Torben had just entered was their deadline and the planned launch date, to which Kai added a second date for the slower TV media. Rahild displayed a few clips on the wall, which her virtual assistant backed up with ratings and buying figures. This ad-hoc input was gratefully received. Kai would also keep it in mind for the classic media. Kai referred to the recording system, which would document the presentation and in which the key facts would be condensed down to five minutes by bots. “I take it that all three of you will be available in case there are any questions?” They agreed to this common practice, even if that might mean suddenly having to respond in the middle of the day or night.

Jeanne’s virtual assistant had used the time to reformat the presentation in a 360° panorama view. And it worked: suddenly a sandy beach appeared under her feet and waves were crashing against the shore behind Rahild and Kai. The sound system reacted fantastically and the simulation was impressive. Thanks to the huge number of pictures Jeanne had in her Instagram account, on the 30 cylindrical metres she was easily able to recreate the festival vibe, the mountain trekking tour and the promenade on the Côte d’Azur. Just as she was introducing the various touchpoints with the brand using the example of the promenade, there was suddenly a humming noise in the room and a holography emerged between them: they were joined by Ms Lahore, her blue hair shining in the simulated sunlight. Perfectly styled, she greeted everyone and moved quickly from touchpoint to touchpoint, although her bouncy jumping shoes were faster than her holographic trans-

mission, which led to some strange distortions. She seemed very impressed and asked a few questions about targeted ads and content-related services that could be transformed into paid content. Rahild made the effects transparent and referred to the first evaluation, for which they had received excellent feedback. Torben explained the variations of user interaction and identification, laying the foundations for Jeanne to continue. Jeanne intensified the colours, zoomed in on shoot visuals, fashionable accessories and home décor stills and showed everyone the user’s perspective: at home, in a dating restaurant, in a high-speed train and in a science centre, where they could experience the changing atmosphere each time through the activated touchpoint.

“That was amazing!” Torben said, praising her a short while later over lunch, which the three of them enjoyed together in one of the terrace restaurants overlooking the exotic park. They sat on the gallery floor and admired the views through the open, five-metre-high windows. A long rectangular water basin cooled down the air that was blowing in. They were presented with a range of fancy healthy drinks as a greeting from the headquarters. “I’m relieved that it went so well,” replied Jeanne. “It’s a pity that she wasn’t physically present, but at least we were able to create the maximum effect within the space. And she bought the design up to performance phase 4. Congratulations, guys!” Mate tea, ayran and coconut water appeared in the middle of the table. “Okay, feedback round!” said Rahild, announcing the long overdue item on the schedule. They each looked at the summary of their virtual assistant, who assessed the personal commitment, reliability, idea input, pragmatism, implementation quality, effort-cost factor and social competence of their performance. In some cases, they added explanations or instructions. Justifications had to be avoided at all costs and a high degree of

empathy was required for the instructions. Almost all of them achieved the full number points, apart from Torben who had been scored down for the many interruptions caused by his son. “I know I need to get better at that, but I can’t just ignore Paul’s signals,” he sighed. “Yes, sure,” replied Jeanne, “but it’s still good to swap your own perception for a more objective view. Have a look at how Paul is judged by his virtual assistant, maybe that will help you with your assessment.” “What? No! Out of the question. That means I would trust the virtual assistant more than my son!” said Torben in disgust. “But I bet you watched the recording of what happened though?” asked Rahild. “Yes, but only in the camera function, without making any comments. I have to accept my son’s privacy too!” “Oh, come on Torben! Your job involves you hacking into client databases, yet you have the cheek to tell us about protecting people’s privacy?” If there was one

thing Jeanne hated, it was self-righteous guys with hypocritical moral concepts. Right on time, the cooling impulse came and flowed through her hands. “Okay, okay. No reason to get aggressive,” she said, following the advice of her virtual assistant. “I keep noticing that my virtual assistant knows me and my family better than I know myself or them,” Rahild said, shrugging her shoulders. “I can’t even begin to tell you how many misunderstandings, quarrels and disputes we have avoided because we use these little virtual helpers to help us straighten things out and permanently ask them questions.” And the best thing about it is,” grinned Rahild, “that it takes care of everything for me!”

An LED on the table slowly began to pulsate, announcing the next guests. They had used up their voucher, but it was time to leave anyway. As no helper came to clean up after them, they threw the dishes and food leftovers into the composter themselves. Their virtual assistants would set up a chat for the next steps within the next week. After exchanging a few niceties, Rahild jumped into a carpool that stopped to pick her up, Torben hopped onto an e-board and Jeanne cycled off on a bike.

Spending some free time with her kids did Jeanne good. She wandered around Space World and, after the tiring two weeks, she really enjoyed spending some quality time with her children. Ben admired the replicas of the rockets and space shuttles and solved little puzzles in the cockpit chatting with a former spaceship pilot, while Lilli and two other children reorganised the space station.

When they were back outside in the sunshine, her satnav led her a few metres down to the riverbank, where her cute monster robot was already waiting with a picnic. He was protecting

the spread from an urban robot that was collecting waste and would continue his work in this very spot after they had finished their own picnic.

Back at home, Jeanne snuggled with her two children on the wide lounge bed, asked them about their day, activated the glow-worms on the ceiling and waited until the swaying motion sent them off into sleep mode. As she let the glow-worms light up her way into the bathroom and her bedroom, she received a call. An older lady was sitting in front of a translucent screen, behind her a few high-rise buildings and the sea. On the screen she recognised her presentation, Jeanne’s virtual assistant told her it was Chicago and Ms Lahore. “Ohhh, so that was her avatar before and now she’s sitting in front of me, and that must be Lake Michigan behind her, not the sea,” Jeanne said to herself. The connection was good, Ms Lahore’s voice was the same as it had been that morning and her question was just a minor one. She approved the summary of the call, which a bot had completed on behalf of Ms Lahore, and made it visible to Rahild and Torben. Tomorrow they would receive the official confirmation.

Satisfied, she closed her eyes. Jeanne found it hard to imagine how agency staff ever managed to get this stressful job done without virtual assistants, household robots and intelligent environments.

When they were back outside in the sunshine, her satnav led her a few metres to the riverbank, where her cute monster robot was already waiting with a picnic.