



The only thing that is constant in the world is change

We've come so far in terms of computing technology that the world today is unrecognisable from that of 50 years ago. The technological revolution has changed millions of lives for the better with tools like Smart phones, tablets and laptops, each enabling so many new opportunities. With these tools, we can run online businesses, shop for groceries from the comfort of our own home, complete further education from remote locations, and stay in touch with loved ones, in real-time, from anywhere on the planet.

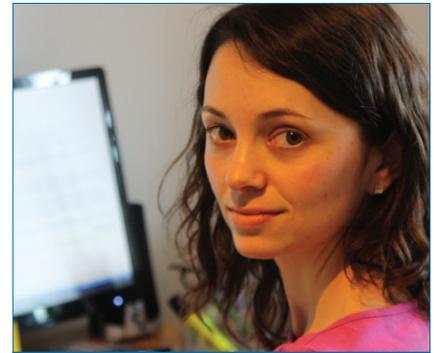
In my view, there have been two key enablers that have made all this possible. The first is the Internet; connecting anyone, anywhere, we have truly become a global community of people able to buy, sell, and interact, regardless of position or location. The second is automated production; with it, manufacturing costs have plummeted, making advanced technologies such as those Smart phones and computers that can connect the world, affordable for the majority.

In June, I visited OneWeb Satellites at Airbus' manufacturing facility in Toulouse. OneWeb has a vision of creating a fleet of 900 satellites in low Earth orbit (LEO) that will deliver high-speed Internet access to the entire world by 2020. The company aims to connect the under and un-connected, delivering services to schools, governments and communities, and effectively solving the digital divide.

To achieve its goals, OneWeb has taken the next logical step in satellite manufacturing, making a significant breakthrough in the development of small satellite constellations. During my visit, OneWeb inaugurated its first assembly line for end-to-end validation, testing and integration of the 900 satellites required for the OneWeb LEO constellation. The assembly line will break all previous records, manufacturing satellites at a rate of one per day. Once OneWeb's two other assembly lines in Florida are completed, the company will be able to produce three satellites per day, bringing the production time of its satellite fleet down to around a year.

Traditional communications satellites take somewhere in the region of one year each to integrate and test, making OneWeb's achievement a massive breakthrough for the industry as a whole. With strict controls and an extremely high level of automation demonstrated during the factory tour in June, standards will be kept tight, ensuring the OneWeb satellites will be produced to the highest specifications. Certainly, there have been a lot of murmurs and scuttlebutt about how the satellite constellations proposed by various companies were going to be filled in a timely manner – now, OneWeb has shown how it will be done.

It's said that the only thing that is constant in the world is change, and that's true for the satellite industry as well as everything else. Who knows where we'll be in another 50 years. 🌸



Editor - Amy Saunders ●●●



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