

THOUGHT-STARTER: ARE TECH COMPANIES DOING ENOUGH FOR OUR WELLBEING?

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At Web Summit 2018, loneliness emerged as the next wellness frontier, while technology companies showed how they are working to better protect global citizens' futures.

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According to a recent study from the British Red Cross, more than 9m adults in the UK always or often feel lonely. While technology is often blamed for fuelling social isolation, several exhibitors at Web Summit showed online platforms that facilitate more meaningful interactions between strangers.

'We believe that a mobile application is the best way to bring people together offline and create social contacts,' said Elena Köstler, founder of SAM Application, which was developed to help people re-engage in social activities on a one-to-one basis. 'This is how we want to remedy loneliness.'

Also palpable at this year's event was the technology industry's acceptance that it must lead the change in helping to create safer global societies for tomorrow's citizens.

Microsoft president Brad Smith stressed the need for the technology industry to step up and drive both digital peace and trust in technology in the age of cyber-threats. He pointed to Microsoft's new civic-focused campaign, Demand Digital Peace, which asks internet users to find their voice and fight back against governments' use of cyber-warfare.

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