

A photograph of three people standing on a rocky cliff edge, silhouetted against a sunset sky. They have their arms raised in a gesture of triumph or connection. The background shows a vast ocean and distant landmasses under a golden, hazy sky.

STAY CONNECTED

Webinar Wednesdays

Top 8 Takeaways from the Ubuntu & Cutting-Edge Packaging Environmental Solutions Webinar

Featuring Peter Schelstraete from Ubuntu

Webinar took place April 29, 2020

1 Ubuntu is an environmental solutions platform that solves a collaboration asymmetry by linking scale to innovation. It connects 1500+ environmental solutions across plastic pollution, food and textile waste with broad content and almost 3000 members including innovators, academia, venture capitalists, NGO's, expert organizations.

2 Back to the Future - environmental solutions are seeing an interesting dynamic where solutions that existed decades ago e.g. "return of the milkman" with reusable, returnable packaging systems, are complementing new and future innovations in this field e.g. lightweight refillable PET bottles with recycled content and ID laser marking that delivers supply chain efficiencies for returnable glass bottles.

3 There's a positive tension between legislation and innovation where government directives on single-use-plastics and the circular economy are driving environmental solutions beyond traditional lightweighting and reduction to refillable, packaging free and smart technology applications.

4 Packaging free systems tap into the realm of affordability for consumers globally (and especially in tough times as we're experiencing now with Covid 19). Several trials are in place for self service milk dispensers in shops, electric tricycles move FMCG product dispensers around communities, mobile apps locate free water dispensers for people on the go, all using a reusable and recyclable package.

5

Smart packaging apps are enhancing consumer engagement and providing supply chain traceability. Examples highlighted the ability for mobile phone apps that leverage NFC and RFID technologies to learn more about a brands sustainability projects and how fresh your milk is on shelf when you purchase. More on Smart packaging in our PAC webinar next Wednesday May 6th 2020.

6

Corporate sustainability goals for 2025 and beyond that cite increased use of recycled content are creating a race for scarce recycled materials and driving significant investments in vertical integration e.g. corporations buying PET bottle recycling plants.

7

There's also a race to have recyclable pouches. It's intriguing in developing markets that the most affordable packaging is the least recyclable. Lots of activity to develop mono material pouches (with barrier properties).

8

Finally, it was fascinating to hear about innovations focused on carbon neutrality or even carbon positive solutions where bio based materials are transported using sailing ships - yes, we really are going back to the future.