THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS COLLABORATION

2015 EDITION

How the latest trends, technologies and innovations—anywhere-ization, the workplace of things, asynchronous vs. synchronous work, big data and convergence—are shaping the landscape of modern business collaboration.
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INTRODUCTION

COLLABORATION IS VITAL TO SUCCESS.

COLLABORATION IS ALSO CONSTANTLY CHANGING.

In early 2013, in conjunction with several industry experts, PGi produced the first *The Future of Business Collaboration* eBook, covering topics including BYOD (bring your own device), globalization, the mobile workforce and social media, and how these evolving trends were affecting the nature of collaboration in the workforce.

Some trends fade into obscurity, some become everyday tools in our work lives and some continue to evolve, tweaked by innovations and paradigm shifts. And because time marches ever forward, dragging trends and technology in its wake, we must be ready to adapt.

Now, we are proud to present the 2015 edition of *The Future of Business Collaboration*, a recognition that the trends and technologies powering business collaboration are always on the move, and that only by continually discussing and analyzing these trends can we arrive at—or rather, create—the future of business collaboration together.

THIS YEAR’S KEY BUSINESS COLLABORATION TRENDS ARE:

ANYWHERE-IZATION:
The evolution of BYOD, anywhere-ization reflects how work can be accessed and completed from anywhere, but with several key considerations for organizations and IT departments.

THE WORKPLACE OF THINGS:
The Internet of Things, or the development of intelligent and connected objects that provide contextual data and information, has primarily targeted the smart home to this point. However, the technology will inevitably find its way into the workplace.

SYNCHRONOUS VS. ASYNCHRONOUS:
Increasingly remote and flexible workforces create a very specific problem: time. Collaboration always rode the line between real-time (synchronous) interaction and near-time (asynchronous), and cloud-based collaboration technologies are starting to reflect this dichotomy.

BIG DATA:
Big data has been a trend for companies for many years now, but we’re beginning to move past the “collection” stage and into the “analysis” and “application” stages. How we collaborate with and around data will define success for organizations moving forward.

CONVERGENCE:
The idea of unifying business applications—including collaboration—will be a pervasive one in the coming years. The deluge of cloud apps will eventually have to be unified, whether through open APIs or a provider creating a singular, unifying experience.
THE CHALLENGES OF ANYWHERE-IZATION

By Blake Brannon, Senior Solutions Engineer, AirWatch® by VMware®

Whether a company decides to implement a bring your own device (BYOD) program or a corporate owned, personally enabled (COPE) system, employees are enjoying more choice than ever before in the devices they use for work. Couple these device programs with anywhere-access to cloud-based applications for collaboration, file storage, task and project management, and we’re experiencing a new wave of “anywhere-ization” in the workplace.

Work can get done by anyone, from any device, anywhere and at any time.

However, even as BYOD continues to mature, concerns remain for organizations and their IT departments. Every week there’s a new story of leaked or hacked data, often from large multi-national corporations with considerable resources dedicated to managing security.

An end user wants easy access to company data, resources, and collaboration and communication tools with minimal obstacles and privacy; but the IT department needs to ensure security. So how does an organization achieve these seemingly contradictory goals?

Software and hardware companies are both tackling this problem head-on, attempting to segregate the work and personal aspects of an employee’s device and data without noticeably affecting user experience. Some device manufacturers, aka OEMs, provide enterprise-enabled devices with built-in secured workspaces that can be managed remotely by IT, while leaving the personal side of the device untouched.

On the software end of the spectrum, Mobile Device Management (MDM) deployments are becoming increasingly vital to IT to minimize the security issues that can arise from BYOD.

Regardless of whether they use a hardware- or software-based solution, by using an extra layer of mobile management through MDM, IT departments can:

+ Control the flow of data into and out of their organization
+ Manage application-level or even content-level features like printing sensitive emails
+ Remotely lock down or wipe enterprise workspaces on devices, leaving personal content untouched

Ultimately, the next frontier is enabling users to access any application—mobile or legacy—plus any piece of content from any device with a consistent experience, while accomplishing IT security, control and automation. With an increasing focus on anywhere-work and employees becoming accustomed to the efficiency and productivity gains afforded by BYOD, companies and IT departments have to be on the cutting-edge of technology that allows control of their data and devices.
The number of people who will use tablets in two years: 907M

Tablets used for work and home will triple by 2017.

42% of employees use their own devices for work. Efficiency and productivity have improved.

73% of IT managers cite security implementation as a top concern surrounding BYOD.

83% cited BYOD having round-the-clock access to corporate networks as the most pressing threat to security.

The number of people who bring their own mobile device to work: 1 in 3.

Surveyed employees who bring their own mobile device to work:

- 78% believe it helps work/life balance.
- 70% use it to access corporate data.
- 21% do so in spite of existing policy.
- 15% use it without IT’s knowledge.

Employers are concerned with:

- IT security
- Automation
- Consistent experience

How do you measure BYOD success?

83% said BYOD has increased the number of helpdesk tickets.

Minimal increase in IT helpdesk tickets
Track user access to corporate resources to determine actual usage of the tools provided
Ensuring data security by performing regular audits

The next frontier: Access anywhere via BYOD.
THE WORKPLACE OF THINGS:
WELCOME TO THE OFFICE OF THE FUTURE

By Melanie Turek, Vice President, Research, Frost & Sullivan

The concept of the “Workplace of Things” is built on the central idea that the workforce will be increasingly mobile, and that the work environment itself is smarter than ever. Frost & Sullivan research shows that at least one-third of all employees in businesses in the U.S. and Europe are considered “virtual” employees—meaning they work from home, the road or a satellite office most or all of the time.4 Meanwhile, next-generation technologies such as augmented reality and the Internet of Things are expected to accelerate employee efficiency and productivity, allowing people to work and collaborate anytime, anywhere.

The changing work patterns of users and the increasing need for a better work-life balance are greatly influencing the progression toward an intelligent workplace.

Mega trends such as urbanization, smart cities, the growing dominance of Millennials and increasing network convergence demand the infusion of next-gen technologies into the unified communications and collaboration (UCC) framework.

In the Workplace of Things, these productivity applications are married to communications services to deliver a complete, integrated toolset that enables efficiency and productivity gains, enhanced customer engagement, better employee collaboration, measurable cost savings and higher revenues.

Imagine, for instance, that you are on a web conference with a group of colleagues. If the conferencing bridge can access relevant back-office data based on your presentation (identify where you are calling from and on what type of device, and connect to your personal schedule and contacts), it can deliver a much richer, personal and more effective meeting experience—one that adapts and changes as you do. Add wearable devices, smart peripherals and virtual reality, and suddenly organizations will truly enable employees to work anywhere, anytime—while boosting productivity and the bottom line.

Businesses are increasingly converging their UCC applications with business processes to ensure the seamless flow of information across all business units and end users, and within a multi-modal and context-aware environment. They are also deploying them on a variety of devices, including smart phones and tablets, and integrating them with back-office and other enterprise applications, such as enterprise resource planning (ERP), supply chain management (SCM), customer relationship management (CRM) and workforce management (WFM).

A recent Frost & Sullivan survey of 300 North American decision makers who were responsible for purchasing mobile software applications reveals that in 2014, 82% of respondents deployed at least one mobile worker app; 49% have implemented between one and 10 apps.5

Businesses are clearly interested in creating more connected, intelligent workers through technology that follows, learns and engages. We expect that number to increase over the next few years, as more companies see the value in embracing the Workplace of Things.
FORECAST: THE INTERNET OF THINGS

THERE WILL BE 26 BILLION AUTONOMOUS INTERNET-CONNECTED DEVICES BY 2020.4

PROJECTED NEW ADOPTION OF CONNECTED TECHNOLOGY BY CONSUMERS9

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS:

- smart refrigerator 60%
- smart watch 45%
- smart thermostat 43%
- wearable fitness device 43%
- connected security system 35%
- wearable heads-up display 16%
- smart clothing 14%

COMPTIA SURVEY OF IT EXECS SHOWS THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF IOT:8

- smart thermostat 43%, connected security system 35%, smart refrigerator nearly 60%, wearable fitness device nearly 43%, smart watch nearly 45%, self-driving vacuum cleaner over 40%, wearable heads-up display 16%, smart clothing 14%

HOW CAN THE INTERNET OF THINGS IMPACT YOUR BUSINESS?7

- 23% Believe IoT will change their business model or strategy
- 30% Believe IoT will unlock new products and services
- 63% Believe companies slow to integrate IoT will lag behind competitors
- 68% Already investing in IoT
- 96% Expect to be using IoT devices within three years

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS:

- 46% Create new business opps
- 45% Control and monitor new devices
- 44% Collect new data streams
- 42% Boost systems intelligence
- 35% Gather more customer context

CHAPTER 2
CHAPTER 3

THE PROBLEM OF TIME: ASYNCHRONOUS VS. SYNCHRONOUS COLLABORATION

By Isaac Garcia, Founder, SVP & General Manager, Central Desktop, a PGi Company

Collaboration helps people come together to accomplish what they couldn't do alone.

But what does “together” mean in today’s society?

Workers are always connected. Smartphones, laptops, tablets, even smartwatches are all part of a global tech ecosystem that keeps everyone in constant contact. In a sense, everyone is always “together.”

The problem becomes one of time. Literally. As teams become increasingly diverse geographically and businesses leverage more flexible workstyles, team members are temporally displaced from one another. Scheduling real-time meetings, which can be arduous even within one time zone, can become practically impossible across multiple ones, let alone when dealing with telecommuters and flex workers.

That’s why near-time, or asynchronous, collaboration is becoming more and more important for businesses, agencies and teams across the globe. In essence, it’s collaboration that’s “out-of-time”; it doesn’t require you and I to be in the same place at the same time to work together.

The traditional method of asynchronous collaboration has been email, but it has begun to show its age amid the digital revolution: no version control, no real central and consistent record of events and very little tracking and accountability. Teams can make these things work in email, but doing so requires added manual steps that slow down the collaboration process and ultimately impact productivity.

Thanks to the power of SaaS (software as a service) and the cloud, asynchronous collaboration solutions such as team workspaces keep everyone on the same page: tracking projects, files, documents and ideas in a central repository that anyone inside and outside of your organization can access on their own time. Instead of grinding productivity to a halt by gathering everyone into a meeting for a project update, everything lives in the cloud, staying up-to-date automatically.

Email isn’t going away, and it still serves a purpose with organizations of any size. But it hasn’t yet evolved to meet the ever-changing collaboration needs of the modern workforce. To meet the growing challenges presented by time, companies must rethink their approach to asynchronous collaboration to enable anywhere, any-when work.
DISTANCE IS DEAD, BUT TIME ZONES AREN'T.
—TIME-SHIFTING EXPERT, ERRAN CARMEL

WHICH PROBLEMS ARE MOST PAINFUL FOR VIRTUAL TEAMS?

1. 41% struggle with task management
2. 23% hate long email threads
3. 19% have issues scheduling meetings

86% of executives cite lack of collaboration or ineffective communication for workplace failures

WORLDWIDE, 10 MILLION KNOWLEDGE WORKERS REGULARLY COORDINATE WITH TEAM MEMBERS ACROSS TIME ZONES.
The Problem Is Not the Data, It’s Your Organization

By Craig Kronenberger, Global Managing Director, Strategic Growth, Edelman

Today, even the most beloved and deep-pocketed brands are having trouble demonstrating the impact of their strategic initiatives: sales and marketing programs, IT projects, HR initiatives and more. Over the past decade, and at an accelerated pace more recently, the rapid progression of technology and proliferation of new communication and collaboration channels such as social media have given way to a more resourceful, connected and vocal workforce and customer base. These shifts have opened up new possibilities for organizations that place high value on data by providing increased capacity and opportunity to monitor, measure and build context around customer habits, sales and other KPIs (key performance indicators) that indicate progress against business goals. This new, connected landscape is undoubtedly challenging, but it’s important to note that in parallel to these landscape progressions there has been much progress in the realm of data. New forms of consumer data (social data, for example) are available, and advancements in technology, data storage competency and processing power enable organizations to deliver on new demands—building data-driven insights and strategies to drive the business—forward. Navigating Big Data has proved challenging if not impossible for even the best technically- and financially-equipped organizations. It’s time for companies to befriend data and rethink how they operate around it. Obstacles to successful use of data are present in most organizations and are for the most part blind to industry, category and business goals. Adoption of a data-driven approach requires cross-organizational buy-in, a new internal mindset and an overall cultural shift. Successful use of Big Data requires collaboration. It’s not enough to simply collect and analyze in a vacuum; teams have to work together on the data and efficiently share it across the organization for its true impact to be realized. This process starts with smart investments in people, process and technology. All three play an important role in driving impact with data throughout the organization. The questions on the following page can help uncover true needs, drive roadmap development and kick-start the process of taking better advantage of data throughout the organization. Bottom line: data should be something the organization embraces rather than fears. Leveraging data-driven insights enables teams to think and act more strategically and, when executed and communicated properly, allows for better understanding of business performance. The first steps are the most important. Go slow. Keep it simple. Start by defining what questions your team needs answered most, and then ensure they ladder up to larger organizational goals. Understand the gaps within the organization, potential roadblocks of integration or collaboration and define what new roles are needed to drive use of data going forward.
BIG DATA BY THE NUMBERS

GROWTH IN BIG DATA TECHNOLOGY AND SERVICES

$10B

2013

$20B

2016

56%

Of businesses are overwhelmed by the amount of data their company manages.

BIGGEST BENEFITS OF BIG DATA:

- Drive Operational Efficiency: 73%
- Maintain a Competitive Edge: 50%
- Boost Productivity: 46%
- Drive Innovation: 41%

9 QUESTIONS TO KICK-START YOUR DATA-CENTRIC ORGANIZATION

PEOPLE

Diverse (traditional data expertise, strategy and planning skill sets) and tightly integrated talent drives change through creation and proper application of data-driven insights.

1. How do we identify analytical, marketing and strategic planning skill sets that help carry data and insights to strategy?

2. How can we educate stakeholders to leverage data better?

3. How do we align on goals and measurement priorities throughout the organization?

4. How do we better understand the relationship between various interdepartmental efforts?

5. How do we build and implement a workflow that enables efficiency, flexibility and scalability?

PROCESS

Process enables efficiency and agility; better aligning goals and measurement priorities across the organization and workflow will allow for adaptation in the short term and scale in the long term.

6. Are we getting the answers we need from the data?

TECHNOLOGY

Invest in the right combination of tools and resources for faster, more accurate, comprehensive and meaningful application of knowledge from data.

7. How can we visualize data so it becomes more useful?

8. How do we ensure we are technology agnostic, allowing strategy to dictate the data source and the best technology solution?

9. What’s the right combination of tools and resources for the application of knowledge?
In the past 20 plus years in the collaboration industry, one thing has proven to be true above all others. And if it sounds like a cliché, that’s because it is: the only constant is change. People always need to come together to get work done, but how they come together is a target that is in constant motion.

Creating a collaborative environment is top-of-mind for CEOs around the world, but the definition of what that environment actually constitutes is constantly shifting. Simply bridging gaps isn’t enough anymore. Thanks to smartphones and cloud communication apps, we’re always in contact with one another. The gaps were bridged a long time ago.

The question becomes this: how do we transform connections into productivity?

The answer is one of convergence—for now. Over the past few years, communication and collaboration tools have become sophisticated, easy to deploy and readily available. However, these tools still create disparate overall experiences. You have to go into one application for your weekly status meeting, another to send a quick message to a coworker and still another to grab the latest version of the project plan.

If you take a look at the themes covered in this year’s edition of The Future of Business—anywhere-ization, the workplace of things, big data, asynchronous vs. synchronous collaboration—all of these are just tools. And even if the various collaboration tools you rely upon to be productive are all individually intuitive, the experience of constantly bouncing between different ecosystems is a productivity killer. Each system has its own rules, user experience, pros, cons and limitations.

Change in business technology is a slow process, and integrating these disparate collaboration systems will be no different. But we’re on our way to a truly converged collaborative environment, where team members and organizations can work together whenever, wherever and, most importantly, however they choose.

The convergence ultimately is about the “how.” Current synchronous or asynchronous collaboration tools may offer the “whenever” and “wherever,” but only through a truly unified collaboration platform can we offer up the “however,” removing all barriers to working together and creating a seamless, dynamic collaboration environment for all users, teams and organizations.

The market isn’t there yet, but that’s where the future of business collaboration is heading.
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

BLAKE BRANNON

Blake is a senior solutions engineer at AirWatch by VMware, the leading enterprise mobility management (EMM) provider. In this role, Blake is responsible for guiding overall product strategy in order to enhance the technical component of the AirWatch EMM suite. He oversees a large team of sales engineers that designs customized scenarios on a client-by-client basis to drive sales and improve the customer experience. Blake has worked with AirWatch’s biggest clients, fine tuning security configurations, product design and the integration of enterprise data.

MELANIE TUREK

As the VP of Research for Enterprise Communications & Collaboration at Frost & Sullivan, Melanie covers a broad range of markets, leveraging long-standing relationships with leading industry participants’ senior executives and customer organizations. Melanie has more than 20 years’ experience covering video and web conferencing, social networking, unified communications, voice, IP communications, and instant messaging & presence, as well as a wide range of business software and services. Melanie brings deep technical expertise and in-depth understanding of the ways in which technology can positively impact business processes and performance.

ISAAC GARCIA

As founder, senior vice president and general manager of Central Desktop, Isaac oversees business strategy and sales for the company. Isaac has a proven record in both early-stage technology companies and enterprise sales and marketing. Isaac studied English Literature at Ambassador University in Texas and the University of Northern Colorado Graduate School. He is an active member in the local tech community, where he serves on the advisory board for Innovate Pasadena to drive technology and design awareness for the Greater Pasadena area. Isaac also serves on the UCLA Extension Small Business Management and Technology Advisory Board.

CRAIG KRONENBERGER

Craig is Global Managing Director, Search and Digital Paid Media for Edelman, where his focus is on paid media, search marketing, analytics and insights, crisis and reputation management. With 20 years of experience in digital marketing, Craig is known as a digital catalyst who has championed and led digital strategy for some of the most well-known brands in the world.

BOLAND T. JONES

In the mid-1980s, Boland T. Jones started his first company—American Network Exchange—which provided the first alternatives to the AT&T operator service. Boland foresaw a future in business communications applications and founded PGi in 1991. Believing in the power of innovation to make life easier, Boland stands by the value of transforming big ideas into realities that shape the future and help companies do better business. He was named the 2012 Executive of the Year by both the Stevie® and Best in Biz awards, and he currently lives in Atlanta with his wife and three children.

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AirWatch by VMware is the leader in enterprise mobility management, with more than 14,000 global customers. The AirWatch platform includes industry-leading mobile device, email, application, content and browser management solutions. Organizations can implement these solutions across device types and use cases, including complete EMM for corporate and line of business deployments, and containerized solutions for bring your own device (BYOD) programs. Acquired by VMware in February 2014, AirWatch is based in Atlanta.

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Central Desktop, a PGi Company, serves more than half a million users worldwide. Key Central Desktop customers include CBS, MLB.com, Harvard University, the Humane Society of the United States, Javelin Marketing Group, Upshot, Moxie, WD-40 and Workday. Founded in 2005, Central Desktop is a privately-held company with headquarters in Pasadena, California. Central Desktop’s SocialBridge collaboration platform connects people and information in the cloud, making it possible for marketers and agencies to predictably create and manage successful campaigns by sharing files and knowledge, inspiring ideas, streamlining creative and operational processes and more. Central Desktop was acquired by collaboration provider PGi in 2014.

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PGi is the world’s largest pure-play provider of collaboration software and services. PGi’s unified collaboration platform empowers business users and teams to connect, share ideas and manage projects with the simplicity and everywhere-access of the latest cloud technologies. PGi has a global presence in 25 countries, and its award-winning solutions provide a collaborative advantage to nearly 50,000 enterprise customers, including 75% of the Fortune 100™. In the last five years, PGi has helped over a billion people worldwide connect, collaborate and get work done—in teams, large groups and one-on-one.

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Edelman is the world’s largest public relations firm, with more than 5,000 employees in 65 cities, as well as affiliates in more than 35 cities. Edelman was named one of Advertising Age’s “A-List Agencies” in both 2010 and 2011, and an “Agency to Watch” in 2014; Adweek’s “2011 PR Agency of the Year,” PRWeek’s “2011 Large PR Agency of the Year,” and The Holmes Report’s “2013 Global Agency of the Year” and its 2012 “Digital Agency of the Year.” Edelman has been awarded seven Cannes Lions including the Grand Prix for PR in 2014. Edelman was named one of the “Best Places to Work” by Advertising Age in 2010 and 2012 and among Glassdoor’s “Best Places to Work” in 2011, 2013 and 2014. Edelman owns specialty firms Edelman Berland (research), Edelman Deportivo (creative), Blue (advertising), BioScience Communications (medical communications) and agency Edelman Significa (Brazil).

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Belief in a better way means we look at things from a fresh perspective and do things differently. Lightpath was founded on the belief that we must take every opportunity to challenge the status quo and act beyond what’s expected - something special. We hire employees, work with partners and provide service to customers who believe the same. Our approach may seem unconventional but it’s critical to how we build loyal relationships and provide communication solutions that actually make a difference to the businesses we serve. This is our obsession.

THINK ABOUT HOW YOU MAKE FRIENDS

That’s how Lightpath treat every customer relationship. Getting to know someone is the only way to tell if a relationship will really work. We’ve created a culture that is focused on learning our customer’s story, and when we listen to your story, we can be honest and admit if we are not a good fit for your business. When we are, it’s the mission of every Lightpath employee to work collaboratively with our customers and help solve real business challenges that contribute to their success. This is our commitment.

WE DON’T SELL KNIT CAPS

Ethernet-based network and managed IT services are not one-size-fits-all. We really don’t know what your needs are until we get to know you. That’s why our Sales and Engineering Team will be the first to find out what you want to accomplish for your business and determine the right solutions that can help. For us, understanding why you do what you do is just as important as understanding what you do. This is our belief.

If you’re tired of the same old telecommunications experience, give us a shot.
REFERENCES


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