

JOI Media

The Future of Enterprise

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A Multi-Screen World



Arlette Watwood showcases her iPad outside her office at Cenovus Energy.

Once every 30 years or so, enterprise technology goes through what can only really be described as a perfect storm of innovation. The last time this happened, when the clouds cleared, we were left with the giants of today, like Microsoft, Oracle and SAP. Also left in its wake, were a handful of massive new industries. Perhaps most notably, the business of computer security software.

The winds of change are blowing once again, and in an attempt to inform and prepare companies for the inevitable disruption that will shape the way we work moving forward, I will examine eight massive changes that are on the horizon. This is the first in an eight part series examining the changes that will transform the landscape of enterprise as we know it over the next five years.

What's Changing?

The days of a digital channel limited to a web browser and an inbox are long gone. Today, employees move seamlessly from their mobile devices, to their computers and tablets. As a result, they expect their work systems to move with them as they engage with a variety of devices in different contexts and settings. Day-to-day operations often depend on this in fact.

Mobile phones are forecast to overtake computers as the most common web browsing device by next year and tablets are set to overtake notebooks by 2016 as the most popular PC. Driven by a drop in costs and a rise in features, it's easy to understand why. Tablets have been one of the big drivers for growth in mobile in the last couple of years, and the latest figures indicate this trend will continue to gain in momentum.

A Day At The Office...

In order to allow their business and their people to shine, organizations are amending digital strategies in the workplace to suit multiple platforms—the user experience on mobile phones, laptops and tablets now being consistently considered.

A Multi-Screen World

As second and third screens become a reality of the workplace, the piece of hardware we know as the computer mouse will inevitably become obsolete. Touch and gesture interfaces are changing how we interact with software, and its opening up new possibilities to provide far richer learning experiences and employee engagement.

Corporate training, “Town Hall” facilitations and even everyday “paper pushing” tasks will look drastically different as employees are able to be more interactive; both with each other and their devices.

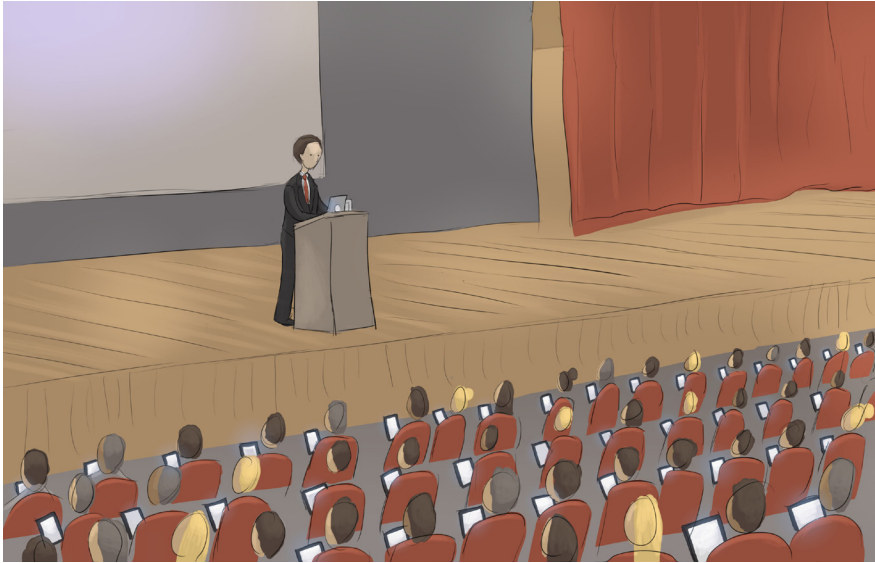
An Early Adopter

Cenovus Energy is a company that prides itself on being an innovation leader. Seeing the possibilities in multi-screen operations, their Manager of Learning Solutions, Arlette Watwood, is looking to shake up the way classroom training is conducted within the organization. “Learning through others and interacting through social learning is a key objective.”

Watwood and her team envision the use of tablets by both course facilitators and those in attendance to facilitate in-class interactions and feedback. Her main focus is allow class attendees provide real time feedback during the class through a mobile device’s web browser instead of filling out paper feedback forms at the end of the class. “A huge priority is managing the quality of facilitators. Quality assurance is very important and ensuring that facilitators are delivering not only a quality message, but consistent message is paramount,” she says. Management of the courses, and the entire class experience are also handled entirely on a mobile device.

Watwood’s ultimate goal is to increase the awareness around student feedback, lower operating costs and, as a bonus, keep Cenovus moving forward and leading its field in all endeavours. Baby boomers drove companies with their values, just like today millennials are driving companies (that will listen) and are shaping their workplaces. Companies need to be on board or else they will be stuck flat footed. “We have to be the company that this generation looks at as being innovative and one that keeps up with innovative, great technology.”

How Cloud Computing Will Make Your Workplace More Accessible



What's Changing?

Cloud computing—the umbrella term for the growing trend of providing software, storage and other services from remote data centers over the web, instead of relying on software or data installed on individual PCs—is quickly becoming the new technological standard for big business. With employees working across so many different devices from multiple locations, cloud computing is increasingly essential for a seamless experience. Whatever solutions companies decide to buy from the likes of Google, Microsoft, IBM, or whoever, they all have to work on the myriad devices people now carry. In a nutshell, cloud computing is making business life easier by allowing users access to the same information regardless of which gadget they have logged on with. It's universal access to storage and services that don't technically "live" on your device.

Over the first three quarters of 2011 alone, there was more than \$10 billion spent on enterprise cloud consolidations. This includes moves like SAP's purchase of SuccessFactors and Oracle's acquisitions of RightNow and Taleo. These moves are signals of the severity of the disruption occurring in this sector—disruption that will make it very difficult for incumbent vendors to hold on and will inevitably revolutionize the way we work. Microsoft has also announced it is revamping its 2013 Office suite to be tailored to the cloud, in the company's largest-ever overhaul of its aging workplace software. If that's not an indication of changing times, I don't know what is?



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How Cloud Computing Will Make Your Workplace More Accessible

A Day At The Office...

Using email and FTP servers to share files is becoming a thing of the past. Installing programs onto your “work computer” and having to log in remotely using a VPN to gain access to your files is a thing of the past. The days of frustration for many employees and days spent troubleshooting for the IT department, are coming to an end as technology has evolved to better serve our workplace needs.

Our new mobile workforce means that software and file storage must be accessible anywhere, on any device and cannot be stuck in one static place anymore. People want to be able to access work while at the beach or soccer field. Simply dropping a file into a centralized location using cloud technology offers easy access and version control with the click of a button, quite literally. This also means that your IT team will be able to focus on their core competencies rather than getting bogged down by contextual issues from their fellow, less tech-savvy colleagues.

An Early Adopter

Classic Kitchens and Cabinets is well known for its operational excellence. Meeting timelines and staying within budgets is an art Director of Operations, Nadeem Esmail takes pride in, and that is why he has taken a proactive approach to develop an explicit digital strategy to optimize day-to-day operations, streamline decision-making and drive profitability. “Today’s new home construction industry operates on tight schedules and short turnaround times. For our just-in-time manufacturing facility, that means focusing a great deal of attention on managing and disseminating information to ensure our team is able to complete work efficiently and on time,” he says.

Bridging the communication gap between head office and field teams is a common problem in this industry and Esmail understands how leveraging the cloud can drastically help this area of the business. “Increasing our ability to access and manage information rapidly, and from outside the office, is key to further enhancing our responsiveness, efficiency, and customer service. Having the ability to tackle problems on site from a smart phone and respond to queries immediately in person will provide us an important advantage in today’s competitive, consumer-focused marketplace. Equally importantly, it also creates the opportunity for a better work-life balance for our employees.”



How Crowdsourcing is Breaking the Enterprise Glass Ceiling



What's Changing?

As buzzwords go, crowdsourcing may not yet be as popular as social media or mobile apps, but it's one of the fastest growing developments in major enterprise today. For those unfamiliar with the concept, crowdsourcing is a new work process that essentially involves getting a crowd of people to help with a task that would typically be performed by one employee or contractor in a traditional business model. Problem solving, design, testing, support and raising funds are just a few of the ways next-generation enterprises are driving efficiencies by adopting this approach into their operating procedures.

Now evident in sectors from government to health research, crowdsourcing represents a seismic shift in the world of employee innovation—one with large economic and ethical implications. While it is still very early days for this approach, evidence is mounting that there can indeed be a direct competitive advantage to using crowdsourcing strategically, no matter what your business is.

A Day At The Office...

Like many aspects of digital business, crowdsourcing is a foreign concept to most non-Internet businesses—and a strange one at that. However, management teams are starting to ask employees to be more vocal in terms of idea and knowledge sharing, and connecting people with decisions to

How Crowdsourcing is Breaking the Enterprise Glass Ceiling

be made with those who hold the answers. Traditional business models involves a lot of top-down thinking and decision making, but forward-thinking companies are realizing that innovation and cost saving ideas can easily come from the front lines of the business when employees are given the opportunity to speak candidly.

In order to be a successful next generation enterprise, you should (and inevitably, you must) carefully pilot crowdsourcing approaches and technologies, cultivate competencies in the techniques, and begin applying them in your organization whenever and wherever it makes sense for your operation.

An Early Adopter

Every day, organizations are tackling new opportunities and solving new issues. ATB Financial set up the Emerge Group in late 2011, with a mandate to grow and celebrate transformational innovation across the business. James Gamage, Managing Director of Innovation at ATB Financial Emerge, sees crowdsourcing this way:

"One of the promises of social technology in all of its forms was that it would make our lives not just more social, but better," Gamage says. "And that potential is at the heart of our crowdsourcing. Whether we do it inside or outside the business, or both, we do it to gather ideas, refine them, connect them to others and create an engaged community and a culture of innovation in the process."

And Gamage says there is value in that community.

"Internationally, there are already successful examples of using crowds to back small business, set up peer-to-peer loans and community and social credit models," Gamage says. "We are looking closely at the role that ATB can play in forming and learning from these crowds, all with an eye to making what we do make life better for our customers."

The Slow Death of Email



What's Changing?

Imagine a life free of the drudgery that comes along with deleting an inbox full of “limited offers” alongside the all of latest bulletins from head office. Though it used to be considered a time saving blessing, email could quickly find itself following the fax machine into the dustbin of once beloved communication tools, turned office nuisances.

As least in terms of internal corporate communication, the death of email might not be as far away as one might think. I’m not saying that you will walk into the office one day soon and will no longer require an inbox, but the slow demise of this time-consuming medium does seem inevitable. Although email has proven itself to be a great linear communication tool, it has limitations in today’s business world – particularly in regards to team collaboration. Will it inevitably be replaced by something more collaborative in the social world? I think so. The deluge of information flooding employee accounts on a daily basis is one of the most important problems companies are currently facing and it’s time to start thinking differently about how corporate communication streams are conducted.

The Slow Death of Email

A Day At The Office...

There's no denying that millennials are starting to dominate the workforce and these young up and comers are already shunning the now middle-aged traditional email method. So too are a number of high-tech, forward thinking offices that have already abandoned email all together. When it comes to group projects, trying to manage workloads and correspond via email can be a lot like collecting sand with a pair of tweezers. You forget to CC people, threads go on endlessly and items get lost in the shuffle or simply in translation.

Instead, many companies are making a shift towards instant messaging and chat-style collaborative services inspired by social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Real-time activity streams of employee activities like status updates, content sharing and a number of other socially-based features are becoming commonplace in the office environment. Not only are these systems easy and intuitive for employees to navigate, but they are streamlining processes that could take dozens of exchanged emails to communicate.

An Early Adopter

When email is the primary communication tool, even the best information flow can get tedious at times. It's for this reason that ELAN Construction plans to take the inbox out of its key processes once and for all. The company is creating a centralized, web-based system that will improve internal communication from corporate announcements all the way through to time card submissions. After conducting internal focus groups Vice President Todd Poulson says "We were challenged with the need to communicate effectively and efficiently throughout our company. We found that while not a large employee group, we are working in many different locations and we were struggling to keep our employees informed."

These types of solutions are being sought by many companies to continuously update its varying group members on contact details, projects, safety, benefits, and training. "We pursued a solution for our employees to interact professionally and socially."

How Digital Interactions are Replacing Face-to-Face



What's Changing?

There are rumblings, especially amongst the Generation Y workforce, of “work” being an activity, rather than a particular place at which one must log their time. Maybe you are even one of the people spreading the concept? While it used to be commonplace for managers to believe their employees needed to be in the same place at the same time in order to maximize efficiency, dispersed workforces are increasingly becoming today’s norm. Employees and/or contractors work in teams that are not only not in the same building, but also in different cities or even countries. These days, it’s not unusual for a company to not even have a formal location to work out of.

While virtual teams are similar to traditional teams in many ways, you can no longer rely on the communication and team building that occurs naturally in face-to-face office environments. Therefore, the current methods of finding and sharing information need to evolve along with these shifting parameters.

Many companies looking to bridge the communication gaps between these non-traditional teams are harnessing technologies like video conferencing, in addition to phone calls and e-mail. AT the same time, executives are also looking to acquire the skills they’ll need to meet this new management challenge.



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How Digital Interactions are Replacing Face-to-Face

A Day At The Office...

The key to working in a virtual team is, without a doubt, communication. Teams must arrive at decisions differently, build trust differently and sometimes they even have differences in time zones to further complicate the working situation.

As a member of a virtual team you must take deliberate actions to foster productive teamwork—with an emphasis on productivity. While co-located teams often benefit most from a leader who acts as a facilitator, virtual teams need a manager who provides clearly defined direction and removes all ambiguity from the process.

An Early Adopter

With offices in Calgary, Houston, St. John's and Dubai, the team working behind the scenes at The Oil and Gas Magazine (OGM) have had their share of interesting experiences running an efficient global operation. "Running a global operation entails using communication tools that allow team members to have connection as if they were in the same office space allowing them to reach anyone at anytime," says Chief Executive Officer Munaf Samji.

With a journalist in Africa and a business development executive in Australia, using applications such as Skype, Join.Me, Go To Meeting and FaceTime allow The OGM to carry out day to day operations efficiently while still maintaining global brand consistency. These tools are essential in facilitating its business processes and allow the company to replicate a consistent model no matter where in the world operations are set up.

The Rise Of Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)



What's Changing?

Instead of spending a chunk of cash buying software licenses every three to five years, companies are now buying subscriptions and getting their software delivered directly to them over the Internet. Most, though not all, major enterprise software will eventually be delivered this way.

The rise of Software-as-a-Service, better known as SaaS, changes which software companies choose to buy and the way in which it gets to them. Without the costly license barriers that require large rollouts, software is being bought to match the very specific needs of departments and teams. These days, it's actually common place for the employees who will be using it daily to make the big decisions about what to purchase, instead of the company's IT professionals. If the product meets the needs of broader organizational goals within a company, they will negotiate for an enterprise subscription to save money or get features that will make the product more secure and manageable for them.

SaaS companies are making software that is simple, social and looks great. Employees want software that is as easy to use like their Facebook and Twitter accounts. And the new mindset is that less is often more in the workplace.



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The Rise Of Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)

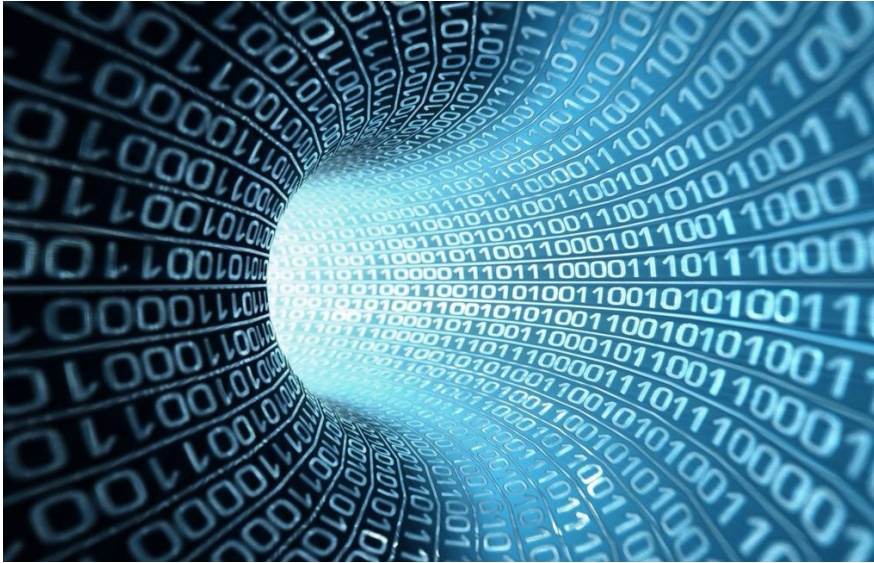
A Day At The Office...

With most SaaS products, it doesn't matter whether you are at your desk, running to a meeting or working from home; you can easily access what you need from any device because they are web-based. You can afford to have a number of programs that make your life easy and you don't have to pay an arm and a leg for them. Equally appealing is that there is often no need for extensive training on "standard features" that you'll likely never learn how to use properly anyway. You won't have to hire a team of experts to make all the components work together and a second team of experts to configure and customize your system for every non-standardized practice of the company.

The pricing and delivery models of SaaS allows organizations to really meet the specificity and intricacies of its needs. Human resources, client relationship management, billing and invoicing, employee expense reports, and many other operations can all be streamlined with the help of a number of great SaaS solutions.



How Big Data Will Make Gut Instincts Irrelevant



What's Changing?

Until the last year or two, the data capacity of traditional tools had more or less managed to keep pace with the growth in data sets. However, the rapid growth of social networks, real time consumer behaviour, mobility, sensor networks and other data generating sources, are starting to cause many organizations' data warehouses to overflow.

New technologies now allow massive amounts of data to be collected, stored, and analyzed inexpensively. As a result, all kinds of new software are being created.

Moving forward, big data's potential is likely to pivot on context: when organizations recognize that big data's ultimate value lies in generating higher quality insights—ultimately allowing for better decision making—interest and revenues should accelerate sharply.



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How Big Data Will Make Gut Instincts Irrelevant

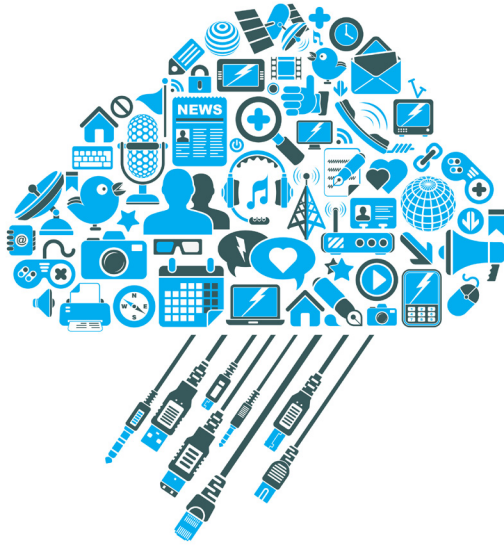
A Day At The Office...

Big data isn't just about technology and employees with the right skill sets though, to really get the most out of it, businesses will need to align workflows, processes and incentives. Best practices include generating a list of important challenges or questions that their current approach to data does not address. A disciplined, targeted approach—one focused on answering very specific questions for the business—is one step many companies can probably take on today without abandoning their current efforts.

You can use big data to optimize pricing or service models, assist inventory management, enhance client relationship management and bolster analytics for measuring company activities. This is just to name a few areas that can reap the benefits of big data in the corporate sphere.



Living Social



What's Changing?

Unless you have been living under a rock, you have likely noticed that social media tools are being embedded into everything. From our spreadsheets to our televisions, this new form of social interaction is ever present and shows no signs of slowing down any time soon. The fact of the matter is that the people want this type of tool at their fingertips. They want to work together, discuss, find experts, get immediate feedback and so on. As a result, smart companies are learning to collaborate more efficiently, connect and interact with ever-expanding communities of customers, suppliers and peers in a social context. This social business concept is in the process of unleashing a new model for operating in an ultra-competitive marketplace by helping to improve productivity and grow profits.

Above and beyond anything else, social business tools allow people to communicate more freely with other employees, suppliers and consumers. Companies can draw on previously untapped capabilities to address existing challenges and explore new opportunities. Doing so enables them to deliver extra value to every aspect of their business from generating innovative product ideas to gaining invaluable market insights directly from their clientele. As a byproduct, they can also incrementally increase profits.



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Living Social

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Collaboration isn't the only avenue being changed significantly by social business tools, however. Every department within your organization is changing and adapting to the capabilities provided by this new type of technology.

But while the potential gains of social media tools are innumerable they also have the potential to damage a company's reputation if not managed correctly. Gone are the days when angry customers called private customer service lines to file complaints. Today's complaint department is out there for the entire world to see. Dissatisfied customers now publicly message your company via Twitter and facebook pages and they demand immediate attention and action. And you had better believe that news of serious workplace incidents and happenings are circulating inside and outside your office walls via employee accounts long before you can issue a formal written statement.

