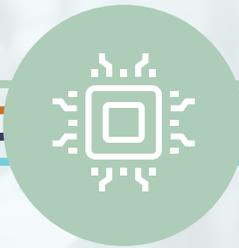


# KEY FINDINGS FROM

# enterprise CONNECT 2018



Thought leadership on cloud communications, digital transformation, team collaboration, and more from **Enterprise Connect 2018**



**Eric Krapf**  
GM & Program Co-Chair,  
Enterprise Connect;  
Publisher, No Jitter



**Beth Schultz**  
Program Co-Chair,  
Enterprise Connect;  
Editor in Chief, No Jitter



**Michelle Burbick**  
Program Coordinator,  
Enterprise Connect;  
Associate Editor, No Jitter

## EC18: ALL ABOUT THE LATEST & GREATEST

For a week in mid-March, Enterprise Connect 2018 took over the Gaylord Palms in Orlando, Fla., turning it into the place to be for those seeking to learn about and experience the latest and greatest in enterprise communications and collaboration. The Expo floor was a marvel to behold – with 200 exhibitors new and old showcasing their products – and we're particularly proud of the conference program we put together.

The EC18 conference comprised more than 60 breakout sessions across nine technology tracks, compiled with expertise from leading consultants and analysts and featuring a mix of panel discussions, user case studies, in-depth presentations, and interactive opportunities. We covered everything from application programming interfaces (APIs) to video collaboration, offering up tactical advice as well as strategic guidance.

As covered on our companion editorial site, [No Jitter](#), a variety of themes bubbled up over the course of the four days of EC18. Chief among them are the growing dominance of cloud communications, the rise of team collaboration, the industry's continuous state of transformation... and what all of this and more means to you as enterprise communications decision makers.

This eBook gives you just a sample of some EC18 program highlights. If you attended the event, we hope it helps you capture some of the show's key insights to share with your colleagues. If you didn't make it to Orlando in March, we hope this eBook gives you a flavor for what the experience and learning is like – and we hope it encourages you to check out Enterprise Connect Orlando in 2019, which will take place March 18-21.



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**Eric Krapf**

GM & Program Co-Chair,  
Enterprise Connect;  
Publisher, No Jitter

## WHAT'S HOT? EVERYTHING

Usually when I look back on an Enterprise Connect show, a few technologies or ideas stand out above the others as the hottest things at the show – “Communications 2020” last year, WebRTC in previous years, and before that, yes, SIP.

EC18 was different. The room counts, registration numbers, and show floor – as well as our exhibitors' and attendees' reactions to them – all tell me that there's not much in our industry today that can't be considered a hot technology.

Sessions on team collaboration drew large crowds, and this was also one of the first topics you'd hear about from people when you'd ask them what was on their minds. The enterprise folks I talked with seemed pleasantly surprised by the rate of adoption and satisfaction they were getting with these tools, especially with Microsoft Teams. Many still talk about the need to drive user adoption with UC in general, and to help users get the most out of these tools. But it does seem to me, at least from anecdotal evidence, that team collaboration tools are now routinely considered an essential part of the UC conversation ([see related article, page 9](#)).

We also saw consistently full rooms for the contact center sessions. This should also not be much of a surprise; contact center is a natural early adopter of technology within enterprise communications. But it's more than that – the amount of innovation happening in contact centers is really remarkable. There's technology innovation via artificial intelligence (AI), like you see with Genesys Kate; there's the overall move to cloud contact centers, where



## CLOUD ENTHUSIASM

Here's how three of our Industry Vision Address presenters characterized what's happening today in enterprise communications:



**“Communications revolution”**  
—Alan Masarek, CEO, Vonage



**“The greatest time” for enterprise communications**  
—Vik Verma, CEO, 8x8



**“Reinvention of communications”**  
—Josh Haslett, VP of strategic innovations, Mitel

Read full article [here](#).

Avaya is bolstering its comeback with its acquisition of Spoken. But there's also innovation in the pricing model, as newcomer ZaiLab joins Amazon Web Services Connect in offering consumption-based pricing. And then there's Twilio jumping into the market with a new type of cloud model via its Flex service.

Big crowds showed up for the return of our strategic technology conference-within-a-conference, which we creatively titled “Communications 2021” this year – reflecting our continuing desire to look three years into the future. And in our track on cloud communications, the best-attended sessions focused on the practical realities of cloud – “Avoiding the ‘Gotchas’ in a Cloud Migration” and “Decision Factors in Choosing a UCaaS Provider” topped the list.



I could go on. We drew strong crowds in the video sessions, and sessions on SIP trunking and session border controllers remain of strong interest. Finally, the session that traditionally draws the biggest crowd – an in-depth examination of “Cisco vs. Microsoft” – was a blockbuster at this year's show. Given that this is the first EC since Microsoft announced the Skype-to-Teams shift, it's not surprising that this topic garnered so much interest; the session that followed it, a deep dive into the Microsoft product strategy shift, was also a huge draw.

So honestly, there was just a lot of buzz everywhere at the show this year. All in all, a big week. The industry's in a strong place right now.

[Read more on No Jitter >>](#)



**Beth Schultz**  
Program Co-Chair,  
Enterprise Connect;  
Editor in Chief, No Jitter

## WHY ANYTHING BUT CLOUD COMMUNICATIONS?

The world we live in today leaves little room for anything but the cloud, enterprise IT execs say.

During the Enterprise Summit at EC18, conversation among our four IT executive panelists centered on cloud communications of various sorts. That's not necessarily surprising, given the transformative power of cloud. As you plan for or dive deeper into your own cloud-based approaches to communications and collaboration, perhaps you can find some wisdom in the insights shared by these thought leaders.



**The World We Want** – “There is no world in which we could actually do what we’re doing [with digital content creation and distribution] or about to do without cloud being core to our strategy,” said John Herbert, EVP & CIO, 21st Century Fox. Quite simply, he added, legacy architecture doesn’t scale for the company’s scope.

Among the cloud collaboration services 21st Century Fox relies on are Slack for team collaboration and Zoom for video conferencing – not only among its 25,000 employees but with external partners, too. Bringing everybody onto the same cloud platform was a “pivoting point,” Herbert said, because it enabled a consistent experience for all.



*“There is no world in which we could actually do what we’re doing... or about to do without cloud being core to our strategy”*

– John Herbert, EVP & CIO, 21st Century Fox



**The Scale We Need** – Cloud scalability also was a key factor in the decision global engineering firm Mott MacDonald made a few years ago to align itself with Microsoft and its Office 365 platform, including Skype for Business Online, said Ron Sattan, VP & CIO Americas. Particular to the communications piece, the company is about halfway through the migration from a premises-based Skype for Business platform for its 16,000 employees, he said.

But don’t go blindly into the cloud, scalability or not. Pay attention to your circuits, uptime, and bandwidth, and “don’t underestimate the strain on the infrastructure that going all-in on cloud produces,” advised Jason Kasch, CIO at Structural Group, a 3,500-strong global engineering services company that’s been using cloud voice services from UCaaS pure-play RingCentral for about six years.



**The Agility We Gain** – While cloud may tax your infrastructure, it should open the opportunity to free up IT and business resources for more productive work, panelists said. Michael Sherwood, director of technology and innovation with the city of Las Vegas, put it this way: “Really, if we’re not number one, number two, or number three, we try to avoid those lines of business... and I don’t think anybody in the audience, or even myself, would say you’ve heard of Las Vegas as being the best cloud provider or the best service provider.”

While Las Vegas isn’t as advanced in its cloud migration as other organizations represented on the panel, it is incorporating cloud-based communications and collaboration capabilities via Cisco Spark (now Webex Teams) into its smart city initiative, Sherwood noted. The city may only have 3,500 employees, but the 20,000 sensors it’s installed around the city are becoming part of the communications ecosystem, he said.

[Read more on No Jitter >>](#)



**Michelle Burbick**  
Program Coordinator,  
Enterprise Connect;  
Associate Editor, No Jitter

## SHADOW IT RESURFACES WITH MODERN TWIST

**Team collaboration latest app giving IT grief with its viral adoption**

At Enterprise Connect 2018, shadow IT once again reared its ugly head, this time around team collaboration apps.

“We all want tools that users love, but there’s a role for IT, too,” Jonathan Rosenberg, VP and CTO of Cisco’s Collaboration Technology Group, told attendees of a general session on team collaboration. “Too often today, each pocket selects its own thing, and the business winds up with a little Slack, a little [Atlassian] Stride – and frankly, it’s a mess.”

IT must guide users on deployment and control the environment to keep it from getting out of hand. A multi-vendor team collaboration environment is too messy and unwieldy; standardizing on a single solution should be the goal, he said.

Shadow IT is definitely a challenge at Yum! Brands, Chris Abrams, director of IT Shared Services, shared during another general session. “There’s a lot of shadow IT – some using this tool, some using that tool,” he said. “The question becomes how do we get everyone to use one system and how do we maintain the security? Of course, my preference is one system, but it’s tough with all the new stuff coming out.”

Seeing as how we’ve been talking about issues around shadow IT for years, as far back as 2007 with the dawn of smartphones, it appears that this problem is not getting any easier to solve with the variety of communication applications that have flooded the market. While some might argue – and many would agree – that choice is a good thing, the reality is the more team collaboration application choices, the bigger problems around shadow IT and standardizing within the enterprise become.

[Read more on No Jitter >>](#)

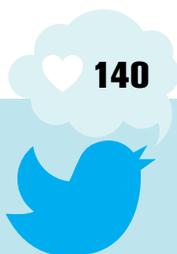
**“Too often today, each pocket selects its own thing ... and frankly, it’s a mess.”**

**– Jonathan Rosenberg, Cisco**



**Blair Pleasant**  
President & Principal  
Analyst, COMMFusion

# 5 INSIGHTS FROM TEAM COLLABORATION ADOPTERS



## TWITTER WORDS OF WISDOM

**Panelist advice, encapsulated in 140 characters or less:**

*Effective collaboration isn't about the tool, but a great tool sure makes it easier.*

– Phillip Miller,  
Brooks Brothers

*We consistently design for user error, but we forget to design for user delight.*

– Richard Bugbee,  
Charter Communications

*Find opportunities with connected thinking.*

– Joe Chambers,  
Matt MacDonald

*Don't try to solve one or two problems. Try to solve as many as possible with one solution.*

– Jeremy Lesch, Welltok

### 1 Pick the solution that best meets your specific needs –

This sounds obvious, but understanding how people work and finding the right tool for their needs is essential. That's how Brooks Brothers selected AWS Chime as its team collaboration solution, Phillip Miller, director of infrastructure and technical engineering, explained. Chime is different from the other team collaboration services represented, as it lacks team workspaces and doesn't have the functionality of the other team collaboration applications, but it met Brooks Brothers' needs better than the others evaluated. And within a few days of launching a limited, six-person pilot, Chime use had spread organically throughout the organization – with 600 users on it within a month, Miller said.

### 2 Standardize on one team collaboration application –

At Charter Communications, for example, IT standardized on Cisco Spark (now Webex Teams) and removed all other team collaboration tools it had been supporting, said Richard Bugbee, the company's manager for IT, UC, and telecom.

At Welltok, Jeremy Lesch, IT director, took a similar approach in moving from five chat tools and four meeting solutions to one. "We shut down Slack and didn't make it optional. We told people that if you want to communicate and collaborate, you have to move to [RingCentral] Glip," said Lesch, adding that IT gave workers two weeks to make the switch.

### 3 Show the benefits –

"It's important to help end users realize how, when, [and] where they can use team collaboration," said Joe Chambers, senior project manager at Mott MacDonald. Charter's Bugbee added, "A lot of people want to know how I use Spark, and I show them how I use it every day and how it solves communication and collaboration gaps. It's easier to show people what I do with the tool rather than explain how they should use it."

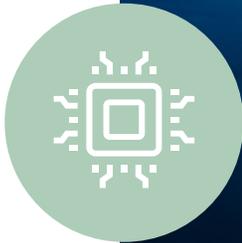
### 4 Embrace end user training and adoption –

Most of the panelists found and identified early adopters who were the evangelists for team collaboration, helping it go viral within their organizations. "We opened up lines of communication," Lesch said. "It's hard to get people to change so we did a lot of training and had open forums."

### 5 Plan and test –

When asked about best practices used, Chambers was very clear: Plan, plan, plan... and test, test, test. "Understanding your business is a key best practice – knowing how your business operates will be vital. Engaging people from around the business to bring their expertise and perspective and knowledge of their work processes is key."

[Read more on No Jitter >>](#)



**Michelle Burbick**  
Program Coordinator,  
Enterprise Connect;  
Associate Editor, No Jitter

## LET'S TALK 'TRANSFORMATION'

### Change is in the air in enterprise communications.

Industry thought leaders who took the mainstage at EC18 shared their visions of a world being transformed:

**Transformation in the way we work...** "We're working remotely, we're working with distributed teams, we're working globally, we're working from any device," and all this change has created a need to unify the experience between cloud PBX, team messaging, video and meetings, and the contact center, said *Dave Sipes, RingCentral COO.*



In his keynote address, *Frerk-Malte Feller, director of Workplace partnerships at Facebook*, also shared his company's vision for the future of work. Recalling how Napster fizzled on its intent to transform the music space and how Spotify and then Apple Music succeeded, he said, "Ultimately the experiences were created that worked. So my message is, don't dismiss a trend just because the initial execution didn't work."

Enterprises everywhere are trying to find new and better ways to do work, improve productivity, and transform their businesses. If an organization has tried one route toward this end and been unsuccessful, that doesn't mean that the idea is moot. Facebook has taken the same user experience that has worked in its consumer site and carried that over to Workplace; and Feller said believes it is this inherent familiarity and ease of use is driving adoption.



**The transformative role of machine learning (ML) in enterprise communications...**

Products such as Google's Jamboard leverage ML to convert handwritten notes to plain text and clean up drawings. And elsewhere ML is improving speech-to-text capabilities for note-taking, enabling the scheduling of meetings with the help of bots, and working on the network side to ensure crisp audio in calls, said *Google's Diane Chaleff*, who works in the Office of the CTO, Google Cloud Suite.



But Chaleff added, "it's critical to remember what doesn't change. The key in all forms of communication is to maximize human ingenuity. Get the junk stuff out of the way and leverage machines so people can do what they do best – be creative."

**Transforming the business of enterprise communications...**



Avaya, having spent the last year moving in and out of bankruptcy, naturally talked about "transforming the business," in the words of *Laurent Philonenko, the company's SVP & GM of Solutions & Technology*. As part of its transformation, he added, Avaya has embraced "openness and integration," promising to offer customers an evolution path that stays true to those principles.

**The transformation from hardware to software...**

"It's important to think from the end user in," said *Alan Masarek, Vonage CEO*. "All customers are going through some form of transformation," he added, emphasizing that the end user should be the focal point in navigating the changes brought on by digital transformation.



[Read more on No Jitter >>](#)



**Beth Schultz**  
Program Co-Chair,  
Enterprise Connect;  
Editor in Chief, No Jitter

## BE YOUR OWN BEST ADVOCATE... AND OTHER CAREER TIPS

Three enterprise IT professionals share advice on how to get the most from your careers in enterprise communications and collaboration.



**Be Your Own Best Advocate** – If you're on the voice team but think you might like to be involved in a video collaboration project, for example, don't be afraid to ask. Be open and transparent about what sorts of projects and skills development you find interesting, and step up and ask to be involved, advised Chris Abrams, director, IT Shared Services, Yum! Brands. "Most leaders who are good will help you get there," he added.

That's true, agreed Stacy Foster, facilities and technology director, Chemonics International, saying she loves to see people exploring what they're passionate about – even if it means they have to leave the company to do so. "Don't burn any bridges," she said. Take the opportunity to expand your professional network, compare notes... and "then get together at conferences like this."



**Cross-Train, Again and Again** – Panelists emphasized the importance of steeping yourself in other IT disciplines. At Boeing, for example, John O'Meara, manager, UC - Integration Services, said he tells his employees that his job is to make their jobs the best they can possibly be, and to see them grow. "I'd like everybody to have a three-year plan, and if their three-year plan is still to be in my organization, then they probably need a better three-year plan," he said. "Everybody should rotate more frequently to get that broader sense and grow themselves."



“Are we doing this because it's sexy, or are we doing it because it's the right thing for the business?” ”

– Chris Abrams,  
Yum! Brands



**Develop Business Smarts** – At Yum!, business acumen is becoming a critical must-have. Abrams said he expects his teams to understand the cost – down to the user – throughout a product's lifecycle and across the business ecosystem. They need to understand the efficiencies and improvements to be gained, and what might be lost in the process. And they have to understand the user aspect, as well, he said. “Are we doing this because it's sexy, or are we doing it because it's the right thing for the business?”

Borrowing a quote from Richard Branson, of the Virgin Group, Abrams shared this principle to lead by: “Train people so they can leave, but treat them so they want to stay.”

[Read more on No Jitter >>](#)

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Full Enterprise Connect 2018 event coverage is available on [No Jitter](#), which offers [insight and analysis](#) from leading experts in the enterprise communications and collaboration industry as Enterprise Connect's community site. [Sign up](#) for the No Jitter weekly newsletter to stay abreast of industry trends.

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