**What Workplace Transformation Means Now: Two Experts Discuss the Opportunities (**What Workplace Transformation Means Now: Two Experts Discuss the Opportunities – Connected IT Blog (connection.com)**)**

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In today's climate, workplace transformation has become a very hot topic. Organizations are looking at how to better support employees' ability to work from anywhere and anytime. This new normal is creating new challenges for IT and operations to handle security, productivity, and manageability concerns. I had the opportunity to bring together experts on workplace transformation from Intel and Connection to get a feel for the real struggles in supporting the remote worker, and also the opportunities to respond with resilience and intelligent solutions. The conversation encompassed how we can enable companies to better tackle the challenges of remote work and help ensure their employees have the best technology for the job.

Rhett Livengood, the Director, Digital Business Enabling with Intel's Client Computing Group, has seen workforce transformation take many forms over the last decade, but not to the levels he sees it today. We all seem to have experienced this in our various roles. Our companies have stepped up to address

the demands of the new workplace. It has brought the relationship between organizations even closer together.

For Jeff Stork, a 13-year employee of Connection who now serves as the Sr. Professional Services Manager, he has seen the white glove services of his department become a critical service for customer deployment of technology and the imperative shortening of the runway between procurement and deployment of technology to the end users.

**Q: What does workplace transformation mean to you today?**

**A: Rhett:** I think this period of workplace transformation—if you start in the old office analogy days—it's really what I call the last mile. There's the basics, but how do you get the employee up and running, productive, and happy in the office? That has changed now as we go to remote working or working from anywhere. Today, remote workers have to handle the 'last mile' on their own.

Workplace transformation for the remote office has to have the right computing device, the right chair for ergonomics, and the right lighting. Do you have decent headphones and microphone so people can hear you? Do you have Wi-Fi that keeps you connected when your child is playing games that don't crash all of your important meetings and Web-based tools?

As employers, how do we monitor the hours spent working? Now the software is smart and knows you're on and reminds you to take breaks, and breathing exercises, and those types of things. That workplace transformation, the work we do now, from anywhere, that's how I define workplace transformation. We need to transform from our lotus position on the couch into some kind of semblance of office space.

**A: Jeff:** I think that's a great analogy, I can also give you one from a client the other day. They were already working on the workplace transformation part and what they had said is that COVID has pushed them into a workforce transformation. So, the platforms are definitely the beginning of it, the reality of it is that it needs to be done anywhere. You have to be able to flip the switch if any of those things change.

**Q: What have you seen in this new Workplace Transformation in 2020?**

**A: Rhett:** For both end users and IT departments, workplace transformation is driving the demand for the deployment of professional-grade computing devices to not only drive professional, productive work environments for the users, but also to empower the IT department to support those workers safely and more securely from their home and remote environments.

For many, many years it's been why upgrade? Why get a faster PC? I have my business apps, I go out on the Web, I have my cat videos, I'm happy. Well, it's very interesting if you've used Teams or Zoom, or any of those types of things. It takes an Intel® Core™ i5 processor to run those backgrounds. Preferably an Intel® Core™ vPro® i7 processor. I don't know if you've ever seen people's backgrounds with lower processing speeds, they look grainy and their heads look like a marshmallow. There's not enough performance to run the background of you at the ocean.

**Shannon:** That's important too! You were talking about people broadcasting from their living rooms. In some meetings you really need a professional background. And there are a lot of people broadcasting from their bedrooms because there is limited space when their spouse is in a meeting, or their kids are

in a remote classroom. The technology needs to be able to create a professional environment in a less than ideal space. You have to have the right technology to deliver that experience.

**A: Rhett** Yes, that's the last mile we were talking about.

**A: Jeff:** That's the last mile. You can put all the hooks in that you want, but if you don't have the baseline machine to run what you've got, then it's not going to do you a whole lot of good.

**A: Rhett:** So, here's another interesting stat: 54% of the workers in the U.S. said even after things go back to normal, they still want to work remotely, and 70% want to work remotely some of the time.[1]

**Q: What has changed in 2020 from an IT perspective?**

**A: Rhett:** On the IT management side of the house. We aren't deploying technicians to employees' desks or homes when issues arise. How are you going to do all those security patches? Or maybe we want to do an OS update. Something that's not as simple. If you have Intel® vPro® platform based devices, you can do that upgrade very, very easily. Having machines managed remotely to support remote workers with OS updates, troubleshooting, and patches is a saving grace for both cost and productivity. And keeping the workplace more secure, productive and healthy.

What we're finding nowadays, is that if something would break on your PC at work, you send someone to fix it or you bring it somewhere to fix it if you are remote. It's a swap out. And that gets very, very expensive. So being able to remotely get into a system, whether that's IT or whether you're the solution provider working directly with the end user, I think is a key differentiator because it allows you to avoid those face-to-face interactions. The Intel® Active Management Technology (Intel® AMT), which is part of Intel vPro® platform, enables these system improvements and recoveries both inside and outside the firewall, via the cloud.

**A: Jeff**: So here recently I have seen the increase in demand on business-class machines for remote IT, for remote system management, for all those pieces. And not to mention the telemetry that clients just have to rely on now, because they don't have the people in the office to support them.

**Q: How is Intel helping to enable the rapid workplace transformation that COVID-19 has caused?**

**A: Rhett:** We have Intel® Hardware Shield. And people say, "Well, what's that?". There's a lot of security. There's endpoint security, cloud security, software security, but we have hardware security. And I think that combination of hardware and software security is very important, especially today.

And the example of the modern device. One of the top security issues that is facing companies since we all moved home because of COVID, is people unknowingly or unwittingly clicking on URLs that turn their system into a brick or give them a virus.[2] So, now we have the capability of actually taking identified bugs and putting them into an isolated area. We teamed up with Microsoft to do this. Then, Microsoft allows you to delete the bad bug, which has been contained in their system. And you don't have to have IT; you don't have to send your computer anywhere. It saves a ton of time. It's a combination of hardware and software, that makes up the white glove service.

We also have our Intel Stable IT Platform Program (Intel SIPP), a part of the Intel vPro platform. Where we guarantee the software and hardware combination for your modern devices for 15 months, or five

quarters. I think that kind of stability—so people don't need to worry about things changing all the time and perform constant upgrades—is crucial.

The Intel vPro platform allows IT to remotely manage their PC fleet. You don't want to send techs into someone's home, where they may or may be exposed to COVID-19, if you can fix things remotely, more securely, and keep the workforce healthy. I think that's a huge benefit of a white glove service—not only for the tech, but for the employee too—in these remote-worker times.

**In Conclusion:**

**We want to thank our experts Rhett and Jeff for sharing their insights. Some key takeaways:**

1. 54% of the workers in the U.S. said even after things go back to normal, they still want to work remotely, and 70% want to work remotely some of the time. How will your organization address those changes going forward?[1]

2. Security is a big concern for IT with workers at home on their own personal networks and using Wi-Fi. Intel, Microsoft and Connection have solution to help IT cope.

3. You don't want to have to send a tech to someone's house—being able to manage issue remotely is a key to successfully supporting your workforce. Intel vPro® technology makes that process even smoother for IT.

4. COVID-19 has been a tipping point for addressing concerns about productivity, security, and manageability in your PC fleet. Make sure you have the right solutions to not only make IT's job easier, but also your employees happier and more productive.

What makes working with Connection the choice for a good number of our customers comes down to the true-needs assessments and consultative approach. We have clients who come to us knowing exactly what they want, and others who know operationally what they need, but look to us for the knowledge and resources to design and procure that technology. We recommend for anyone looking to re-assess their technology to reach out to an Account Manager or complete this form for more information.

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