

# AMCIS 2015 Puerto Rico Panel Discussion

## Connectivity and Continuity: New Fronts in the Platform Wars

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### ABSTRACT

Device interconnectedness in video conferencing, telephony, texting, file-sharing and application handoff has become a critical battleground for tech giants. In this panel, we will distinguish between approaches to device connectivity and application continuity, give an overview of current solutions and share projections for the future of connectivity. Apple, Microsoft and Google are predictably focusing on connectivity across devices and applications rather than across platforms. Given the scope of impact of these innovations, tech giants will be under increasing pressure to architect a world wherein devices and platforms are secondary to what users want to achieve via technology. Participants will examine competing approaches to connectivity and continuity, explore emergent issues for research and practice, and discuss the social and business impacts of these technologies.

### Keywords

Continuity, unified communication, application handoff, device integration, device convergence, connectivity.

### Overview

Smartphones and tablets are replacing notebooks and desktops as computing devices of choice in many corporate environments and homes. Device interconnectedness in video conferencing, telephony, texting, file-sharing and application handoff – an ocean of transformational innovations – has become a critical battleground for tech giants Apple, Microsoft and Google. In this panel, we will distinguish between approaches to device connectivity and application continuity, give an overview of current solutions, discuss potential research and share projections for the future of connectivity.

The technology giants are in a pitched battle for primacy in a new cloud ecosystem that promises fluid device-independent and application-agnostic communication and workflow. Apple's continuity framework enables seamless transition among devices and applications. Microsoft's unified communication solution integrates disparate technologies at the enterprise level. The Google Now initiative anticipates and provides information for specific contexts, and enables application handoff between shared devices.

The big three are predictably focusing on connectivity and continuity among devices and applications rather than across platforms. For instance, Apple has not released an iMessage client for the Windows platform, and Microsoft's Lync is clearly not optimized for iOS. Nonetheless, the boundaries between platforms are becoming increasingly permeable. For instance, iPhone users can access Google Now via the Google iOS app. Given the

scope and impact of these innovations, tech giants will be under increasing pressure to adopt open standards and break down the proprietary silos isolating devices and platforms.

Participants will examine competing approaches to connectivity and continuity, explore emergent issues for research and practice, and discuss the social and business impacts of these technologies.

## Panel Objectives

The objective of this panel is to provide an exchange of ideas among panel members and the audience about connectivity and continuity technologies. The panel will address issues encountered by users who attempt to communicate and work seamlessly across myriad computing and telephony devices. Topics addressed by panelists will include:

- The current state of connectivity and continuity
- Platform idiosyncrasies and approaches
- Application handoff as a canary in a coal mine
- Business and social impacts
- Managerial implications and potential research
- Effects on workplace productivity
- What's at stake for Apple, Microsoft and Google, and the rest of us

## Structure of the Panel

The panelists are experienced technologists with varied perspectives on the computing industry. Each panelist will make a brief presentation followed by Q&A with the audience. The moderator will conclude the panel with a discussion on opportunities and challenges of a future characterized by seamless workflow among devices and applications.

At least one panelist will discuss each of the following:

- Apple's Continuity initiative
- Microsoft's unified communication platform
- The Google Now initiative
- Enterprise, managerial, research and social issues
- The future of connectivity

## Panelist Bios

**Jorge Pérez** is vice provost for institutional effectiveness and professor of information systems at Kennesaw State University. He holds a Ph.D. in information systems from Florida State University and has over two decades of experience as a consultant, systems analyst, web developer and educator. Dr. Pérez has published research on diffusion of innovations, information security, IS education and online learning. He is a 2013-14 American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow whose current research focuses on leadership and digital literacy.

**Meg Murray** is a professor of information systems who holds a joint appointment in the Coles College of Business and the University College at Kennesaw State University. She holds a Ph.D. in information systems and has over thirty years of experience in both academe and industry. Dr. Murray specializes in the development and implementation of emerging technologies to meet educational, business and societal needs. Her current work devises strategies to assess, remediate and amplify skills students need to leverage IT in innovation, a primary driver of economic growth.

**George Coffin** is Vice President of Operations at Dynetics Technical Services. He has more than thirty years of experience in the IT industry leading large-scale system development, management and integration for such enterprises as NASA and the Department of Defense. His expertise includes network implementation, enterprise architecture, and balancing usability and security. His most recent work includes development and implementation of hybrid approaches to integrate private and public clouds in the workplace.

**Joy Fluker** is an IT professional with more than 14 years of experience in industry serving in roles including program management, portfolio management, and business relationship management, most recently at General Motors Corporation. She holds a Doctorate of Science in Information Systems and her current research focuses on unified communications in the workplace, specifically assessing its impact on perceived productivity and relationship building. Dr. Fluker also teaches in higher education in the areas of information systems and computer science.

**Zach Bailes** is an IT professional in the air travel industry currently working for SITA. He holds a Masters of Technical and Professional Communication from Auburn University where he researched visual rhetoric and motivational design. Mr. Bailes is also an adjunct instructor of information systems at Kennesaw State University.

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