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Gartner Says Nexus of Forces – Social, Mobile Cloud and Information - Is the Basis of the Technology Platform of the Future

Nexus of Forces to be Explored at Gartner Symposium/ITxpo, 5-8 November, Barcelona, Spain

STAMFORD, Conn., 30 July, 2012 — A Nexus of converging forces — social, mobile, cloud and information — is building upon and transforming user behavior while creating new business opportunities, according to Gartner, Inc.

Although these forces are innovative and disruptive on their own, together they are revolutionising business and society, disrupting old business models and creating new leaders. As such, the Nexus of Forces is the basis of the technology platform of the future.

"In the Nexus of Forces, information is the context for delivering enhanced social and mobile experiences," said Chris Howard, managing vice president at Gartner. "Mobile devices are a platform for effective social networking and new ways of work. Social links people to their work and each other in new and unexpected ways. Cloud enables delivery of information and functionality to users and systems. These forces of the Nexus are intertwined to create a user-driven ecosystem of modern computing."

Mr Howard explained that not that long ago, people's most sophisticated computing experience was at work, and computing was limited at home. Now, in most cases, the opposite is true. The consumerisation of IT is a result of the availability of excellent devices, interfaces and applications with minimal learning curves. As a result of using these well-designed devices, people have become more sophisticated users of technology, and the individual has been empowered. People expect access to similar functionality across all their roles and make fewer distinctions between work and non-work activities.

Social is one of the most compelling examples of how consumerisation drives enterprise IT practices. It includes personal activities of sharing comments, links and recommendations with friends. Consumer vendors have been quick to see the influence of friends sharing recommendations on what to buy.

Social technologies both drive and depend on the other three Nexus forces:
- **Social provides an important need for mobility:** Accessing social networks is one of the primary uses of mobile devices and social interactions have much more value when they are possible wherever the user is located.
- **Social depends on cloud for scale and access:** Social networks benefit from scale, the kind of scale that is really only practical through cloud deployment.
- **Social feeds and depends on deep analysis:** Social interactions provide a rich source of information about connections, preferences and intentions. As social networks get larger, participants need better tools to be able to manage the growing number of interactions, which drives the need for deeper social analytics.

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Mobile computing is forcing the biggest change to the way people live since the automobile. Mass adoption forces new infrastructure, it spawns new businesses, and it threatens the status quo.

For business, the opportunities — and the stakes — are high. To a retailer, the same device that navigates a customer into a store can redirect the final sale to the competition. To a bank, the mobile phone is a new wallet that could make the credit card obsolete. To a sales organisation, mobile computing keeps salespeople out in the field talking to customers. To a medical caregiver, a patient's vitals and behaviors may be constantly monitored, which increases the effectiveness and efficiency of treatment. Every industry is affected.

However, mobile does not stand alone as an isolated phenomenon. People will interact with multiple screens working in concert. Sensor data will transparently enhance the experience, integrating the virtual and physical worlds contextually. The information gathered in this immersive world will have tremendous value and, ultimately, the lasting relationship will be between a user and a cloud-based ecosystem.

Cloud computing represents the glue for all the forces of the Nexus. It is the model for delivery of whatever computing resources are needed and for activities that grow out of such delivery. Without cloud computing, social interactions would have no place to happen at scale, mobile access would fail to be able to connect to a wide variety of data and functions, and information still would be stuck inside internal systems.

The model of cloud computing is what Gartner calls a "global-class" phenomenon because it focuses on outcomes connected across the globe rather than technologies and outcomes centered on an internal enterprise strategy. In a global-class computing world, everything shifts to the culture of the consumer and the externalised view of computing.

Mobile independent software vendors using cloud services have more options to access information and processes than ever before — without having to own it all. Crowdsourcing can be done through mobile communities because the cloud allows them all to exist in the same "work space" rather than being isolated in enterprise or single-PC environments. The cloud is the carrier ecosystem for a wide variety of data forms, both structured and unstructured. This data can be gathered from cloud-based communities, through cloud services, from mobile endpoints, and all in a consistent and globally available environment.

Information is not stored anywhere in particular. Rather, it is stored everywhere. For years, technologists have discussed the ubiquity of information without realising how to take full advantage of it. That time is here now. Social, mobile and cloud make information accessible, shareable and consumable by anyone, anywhere, at any time. Knowing how to capture the power of the ubiquity of information and utilise the smaller subsets applicable to a company, a product and customers, at a specific point in time, will be critical to new opportunities and for avoiding risks.

Developing a discipline of innovation through information enables organisations to respond to environmental, customer, employee or product changes as they occur. It will enable companies to leap ahead of their competition in operational or business performance. An organisation can succeed or fail based on how it responds to trends such as social media, cloud computing or mobile.

"The combination of pervasive mobility, near-ubiquitous connectivity, industrial compute services, and information access decreases the gap between idea and action," said Mr Howard. "To take advantage of the Nexus of Forces and respond effectively, organisations must face the challenges of modernising their systems, skills and mind-sets. Organisations that ignore the Nexus of Forces will be displaced by those that can move into the opportunity space more quickly — and the pace is accelerating."

Additional information is available in the Gartner special report "The Nexus of Forces: Social, Mobile, Cloud and Information." The report is available on Gartner's website at http://www.gartner.com/technology/research/nexus-of-forces/. It includes a link to the Gartner On-Demand Webinar, "Social, Mobile, Cloud and Information: The Nexus of Opportunity." The complimentary webinar is available at http://my.gartner.com/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=202&mode=2&PageID=5553&ref=webinar-rss&resId=2042516&prm=wb_nof.

Gartner analysts will examine the Nexus of Forces in more detail at Gartner Symposium/ITxpo.

About Gartner Symposium/ITxpo
Gartner Symposium/ITxpo is the world's most important gathering of CIOs and senior IT executives. This event delivers independent and objective content with the authority and weight of the world's leading IT research and advisory organization, and provides access to the latest solutions from key technology providers. Gartner's annual Symposium/ITxpo events are key components of attendees' annual planning efforts. IT executives rely on Gartner Symposium/ITxpo to gain insight into how their organizations can use IT to address business challenges and improve operational efficiency.

Additional information for Gartner Symposium/ITxpo in Barcelona, 5-8 November, is available at http://www.gartner.com/eu/symposium. Members of the media can register for the event by contacting Laurence Goasduff at laurence.goasduff@gartner.com.

Additional information from the event will be shared on Twitter at http://twitter.com/Gartner_inc and using #GartnerSym.

Upcoming dates and locations for Gartner Symposium/ITxpo include:
August 28-30, Cape Town, South Africa: www.gartner.co.za
October 3-5, Tokyo, Japan: www.gartner.com/jp/symposium
October 10-12, Goa, India: www.gartner.com/in/symposium
October 21-25, Orlando, Florida: www.gartner.com/us/symposium
October 29-31, Sao Paulo, Brazil: www.gartner.com/br/symposium
November 5-8, Barcelona, Spain: www.gartner.com/eu/symposium
November 12-15, Gold Coast, Australia: www.gartner.com/au/symposium
March 5-7, 2013, Dubai, UAE: www.gartner.com/technology/symposium/dubai/

Nexus of Forces will also be discussed at the Gartner Catalyst Conference taking place August 20-23 in San Diego, California. For more information on this event, please go to www.gartner.com/us/catalyst. Members of the media can register by contacting Janessa Rivera at janessa.rivera@gartner.com.

About Gartner
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