

<http://www.kmworld.com/Articles/News/News-Analysis/SharePoint-Bill-Clinton-and-transformation-Reflections-of-SharePoint-Conference-2014-95439.aspx>

At SPC14, the facets of Microsoft's vision that were most compelling were around the transformative user experience.

While Bill Clinton may be associated with the concept of Transformation, most would ponder...why in the world would Bill Clinton be mentioned in the same sentence as SharePoint or Office 365? It is an honest question and at first glance, the answer is that there would seem to be "not much". However, when explored more deeply, the relationship that Clinton has with Bill Gates and Microsoft is long standing and the two collaborate and compare notes; especially when it comes to their respective foundations (www.clintonfoundation.org and www.gatesfoundation.org).

So it would only be fair that one Bill helps out another Bill with a favor and a message. The bond between the Bills was vividly illustrated when Clinton shared a brief story about a staff member. The staffer was tasked with identifying the projects within his foundation where Microsoft played an active role. She produced a 36 page support listing how Microsoft had been a fantastic citizen for the Clinton Foundation.

Earlier this month, Bill Clinton headlined as the keynote for the 2014 SharePoint conference in Las Vegas for about 10,000 "SharePointologists". For those that have seen Clinton, he did not appear to be fully on his game nor did he seem to know anything at all about SharePoint. However, Clinton has an energy level and presentation style that is all consuming and especially for Clinton first timers. At the end of the day, Clinton's message was reduced to one of "Transformation".

So once again, why is Bill Clinton spending time on the SharePoint circuit? Well, aside from probably getting his incredible speaking fee; his message of transformation is one that resonated with the Microsoft execs and most of the attendees as they explored how SharePoint can play some role in their vision of transformation.

Jared Spataro, the General Manager for SharePoint followed Clinton and did a wonderful job translating Clinton's global picture of transformation into a more tangible call to action for the conference attendees. He and his cohort in crime, Jeff Teper, Microsoft Corporate Vice President, Office Servers and Services, set the stage, literally, with new ways and examples in which Microsoft is forcing us to all think differently in how we work and communicate more effectively.

Teper and Spataro spoke of their rapidly growing footprint within the Cloud via their Office 365 and Azure environments. In this regard, transformation was being achieved by allowing broad user communities to enrich their communications without the burden of internal infrastructure. Quantitatively, Spataro indicated 1) that Office 365 is now being used in some capacity by 60% of the Fortune 500, 2) Office 365 has now surpassed SharePoint as the fastest growing product in Microsoft's history and 3) there has been a 500% increase in Office 365 subscriptions. Clearly, organizations are not only interested, they are heavily engaged. Many people remain divided on the subject of the cloud. My personal experience at the show is that at least 50% of the people that I met with (over 100) represented their intent to move to the Cloud in some capacity.

From my vantage point, the cloud is unquestionably in the cards for the future in a mainstream capacity and Microsoft will undoubtedly play a significant role in that landscape. And in terms of providing a platform that becomes even more ubiquitous across an organization, SharePoint will score high in contributing to this transformation. My new term for people working in the Office 365 Cloud..."Office 365 meteorologists"!

However, the facets of Microsoft's vision that were most compelling were around the transformative user experience. Let's face it, SharePoint 2013 and its predecessor versions have been a "bit" flat from a user experience perspective. SharePoint 2013 is certainly better; however, in comparison to the litmus test of gamer UIs with rich graphics and engaging user experiences, the business technology of SharePoint simply does not compare. With the wind of the Cloud and iterative development on their back, the SharePoint team has entered into bold new dimension to change up the user experience game.

Specifically, new technology has been introduced in this dimension and it includes "Office Graph" and "Oslo" and at long last, a usable and rich integration experience between the Office 365 product line and Yammer. A few quick specifics on these important new features.

- **Office Graph** | Office Graph amounts to a semantic layer of technology that seeks out relationships between disparate content in systems and then presents it in a much more directed fashion. For example, Office Graph will systematically look to relate how emails, documents, web site content and more may be related together and will provide the user with an "economic" view of information in a way that makes sense. For all intents and purposes, Office Graph is giving users the needle in the haystack.
- **Oslo** | Oslo is perhaps best described as really good frosting on the cake. Microsoft has turned the corporate portal into something that is now a truly rich user experience which when combined with the Office Graph, changes the user experience in an even greater capacity. The navigation and flexibility in configuring this new portal experience is a powerful representation of where the user experience is going and in short, that

experience is in line with the consumerization experience that we now use as the bar to clear.

- **Yammer Time...Really** | When Microsoft purchased Yammer, native SharePoint capabilities were brought into question. Additionally and probably more relevant for this topic, Yammer, despite its preexisting and improving SharePoint integration, was still not fitting properly into the equation. At this conference, Microsoft clearly got smarter as their revised implementation of Yammer has so dramatically changed. Now, Yammer has been fully embedded and integrated into Office 365, including MS Excel, MS Word and MS PowerPoint as well as MS Outlook. The result is what I would now consider, a useable aspect of social computing that aligns user interests with user technology.

Beyond these three very important new capabilities, coupled with the Cloud expansion, a large series of innovations were also introduced. However; let's first have you take a good bite out of this apple to see the transformative ways in which Microsoft is making a difference with SharePoint and the Office 365 stack.

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