



Enterprise Connect 2018

March 2018, Dave Michels

1. Overview

1. Enterprise Connect is the largest annual, multi-vendor event focused on enterprise communications.
2. The conference took place March 12-15, 2018, in Orlando, Florida.
3. This year there were five keynote presentations from executives at Amazon, Cisco, Facebook, Microsoft, and Slack.
4. This year, EC added Industry Vision Presentations. These were presented by executives from 8x8, Google, Mitel, RingCentral, and Vonage. These were similar to the keynotes, but a little shorter and without demos.
5. There was much higher participation from end user customers on panels this year.
6. Organizers reported “record attendance” and about 190 exhibitors in the expo hall.

2. General Observations

1. There were two strong themes this year: workstream collaboration and contact center. However, the show was much broader than in the past.
2. RingCentral dominated the signage in and around the event.
3. All of the Keynote presenters were first-time keynoters at EC (although only Facebook and Slack were first-time keynote companies).
4. Large notable booths included: Avaya, Microsoft, Ribbon, RingCentral, Vonage, and ZaiLab.
5. New or Back: Avaya, Huawei, Nuance, Sharpen, ZaiLab, and Zoho.
6. Show attendance was up; there were record numbers of exhibitors.

3. Selected Announcements

1. There were numerous contact center announcements including: Avaya announced a [Mobile Experience](#) and a new blockchain-based [IDaaS](#); [Genesys](#) improved its Salesforce integration and acquisition of [Altocloud](#); [NewVoiceMedia](#) announced its spring release; [RingCentral](#) announced Pulse; [Talkdesk](#) announced its Enterprise Platform (and 17 other press releases); [Twilio](#) announced Flex; [Vonage](#) released its skills-based router; [ZaiLab](#) arrives in the US.
2. Workstream messaging announcements included 8x8 announced an integrated chat solution coming to its client this summer, [Avaya](#) announced workstream collaboration in Equinox, and [RingCentral](#) announced a meetings client for conferencing and Glip. IBM was back to EC with its Watson Workspace (released last fall). Zoho exhibited its Cliq application. The new G-Suite [Hangouts Chat](#), announced weeks before EC, now has integrations with [Dialpad](#) and [RingCentral](#).
3. Regarding conferencing, there were two disruptive huddle room solutions: [Solaborate](#) announced its low-cost, Android-powered Hello 2. The [Dolby](#) Voice Room system offers its

audio capabilities with auto-framing and whiteboard de-skewing. [NEC](#) announced an alliance with Vidyo. [StarLeaf](#) intends to crash the Skype Room System party with its self-certified solutions (for SfB and Teams). [Nureva](#) debuted audio solutions for large rooms.

4. [Microsoft Teams](#) supports six new features including cloud recording and background video blur, and enabled a [Direct Routing](#) option that connects trunks to Teams.
5. [Vonage](#) announced several CPaaS-related enhancements.
6. [Amazon](#) announced a new usage-based pricing model for its Chime conferencing service. Meetings can now be hosted for \$3 per day up to \$15 per month.
7. [8x8](#) revised the features and services within its X-series portfolio. X4 gets Sameroom, and X6-X8 include expanded contact center features.

4. Keynote Pointz

Bob Davis, CVP Microsoft

1. Everything around us is becoming more intelligent (thermostats, cars, watches, etc.). As objects become more intelligent, we save time, know more, and accomplish more.
2. It's time for intelligent communications, built on a base of UC and leveraging O365, Azure, and AI. The result will be an increase in connectivity, insights, and ability to be proactive.
3. Microsoft presented its vision that integrates UCaaS and conferencing services into Teams. Broadcast services are coming next quarter.
4. Companion experience allows users to join a conference with two devices. This enables, for example, a smartphone to control a presentation or be used as a handheld camera.
5. A new native Teams experience was presented on Yealink and AudioCodes endpoints. Microsoft also previewed a new Logitech enhancement with auto-framing, and a new smartphone desktop dock from Plantronics.

Collin Davis, GM, Alexa for Business, Amazon

6. Evolution of the computer interface: character mode, GUI, web, mobile, to voice.
7. Voice enables "ambient computing." Natural and spontaneous.
8. Conversational experience enables new possibilities, such as asking for a song by its lyrics instead of by name.
9. A voice UI abstracts the underlying tech. For example, "Alexa, start my meeting" can work the same in each room regardless of the equipment and/or solution deployed in that particular room.
10. Voice offers a new dimension of multitasking as it allows a user to get answers without losing focus on the task or app at hand.
11. Private skills can be created for site/job-specific workflows.
12. Alexa can also act as a virtual assistant during meetings by providing responses to inquiries or tracking action items (future).

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