

TECH
LONDON
ADVOCATES

interxion™

IOT DINNER

TECH LONDON ADVOCATES
& INTERXION



OVERVIEW

Tech London Advocates partnered with Interxion to bring together the leading figures from across the IoT space, hosting a dinner to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

A lively conversation, attendees shared unique insight on the future of data storage, the connectivity requirements for IoT, security concerns and the likely impacts of Brexit on the industry – framed within specific use cases and applications.



16
ATTENDEES



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Russ Shaw, Tech London
Advocates & Global Tech Advocates

Rajesh Paul, Inferrix

Jennifer Shinton, Interxion

Thomas Andersson

Bob Doyle, London & Partners

Irina Petrova, Vodafone Group

Tim Stone, Breed Reply

Oltion Xhezo, Vodafone Group

Elliott Denham, Growth Enabler

Tim Swift, Unifi.id

Alex Bazin, Fujitsu

James Norton, London & Partners

Andrew Fray, Interxion

Adam Jones, Interxion

Justin Megawarne, unifi.id

Greta Dunne



OPENING REMARKS

Russ Shaw, founder of Tech London Advocates and Global Tech Advocates welcomed guests to the Devonshire Club for a discussion surrounding the UK's world leading IoT sector. Andrew Fray and Jen Shinton from Interxion were co-hosts for the debate.


Whilst an established tech vertical, IoT is a space that is now receiving particular attention given its potential for rapid growth and innovation that touches every corner of business and society.

Britain has been at the forefront of global advancements and has a central role to play in future

developments, yet in these uncertain times it is essential that the tech community comes together to take on the challenges and support the native start-ups that are emerging in this space.

It is vital that the debate around IoT and its immediate future trajectory involves all key stakeholders, from the big corporates to infrastructure providers, regulators, start-ups, scale-ups and consumers.

This dinner would come to create the foundations for an ongoing dialogue and act as a tool to support both Tech London Advocates' and Interxion's engagement with the sector.





TOPIC ONE: DATA STORAGE

Often overlooked within mainstream conversations, the dinner began with an evaluation of where businesses and global organisations working with IoT should ultimately store data.

The point was raised that with global interconnectivity rapidly expanding year-on-year, it is important to place this debate within an international context. Data storage is seen as being culturally dependent, in territories such as the UAE, sensitivities are raised with storing data overseas.

It follows that equally, trust of the cloud as a means of storage also appears to be culturally dependent.

Beyond cultural drivers, developing countries are also creating localised systems based on security concerns, this limits the extension to which they can integrate with more developed systems, globally.

The use cases for data also have ramifications for the most effective means of storage, Machine Learning, as an example requires multiple sources of data and therefore benefits from multiple storage locations.

Across the spectrum of B2B applications of IoT technologies, industry more generally has differing requirements for data storage than B2C applications or Smart Cities. This is because more collaborative behaviours require local storage and data to be held centrally – participants provided vehicles as a prominent example, whereby this data only becomes of interest when a situation such as a crash occurs.

TOPIC TWO: SECURITY

Next the discussion moved onto issues of security and the extent to which end users can be protected within integrated IoT systems. There are security concerns that arise throughout every level and application of IoT, both B2B and B2C have specific challenges that need to be met, generate differing concerns and require dedicated solutions.

Industry leaders said that B2B applications were more akin to keeping pace with the evolving threat landscape as the private sector would absorb the liability and through contractual obligations would necessarily pay to maintain these systems - ensuring that they constantly evolve and are secure over their duration.

Yet, unique concerns were given regarding B2C applications that face a different challenge. Once most products are shipped, they will receive no security update throughout their life cycle, heightening vulnerability.

The conclusion was made, that given the risk factor of B2C IoT, there was in fact a role for policymakers to play in legislating and creating the correct incentives to make sure companies created secure consumer facing products.

The question was raised as to how stakeholders would specifically mandate start-ups to produce secure goods. In light of the fact that there is an inherent contradiction between scaling the IoT ecosystem, the price of doing so and managing the security concerns.

For those in attendance, the crux of this challenge is to be tackled in effectively defining where liability for security comes to fall. One particular solution given was to open source IoT technologies so that service providers can patch systems – this approach has particular merit when considering products from early stage ventures, organisations that can cease to exist in short time frames.



TOPIC THREE: CONNECTIVITY

The biggest challenge that IoT faces, is the internet. Issues of coverage, connectivity and capacity often arise – several attendees cited the coming of 5G networks as the solution whilst others disagreed.

The debate focused around the respective merits of both 5G and Fibre.

It appears that if fibre is already in place within a commercial setting that it would continue to provide effectively for the needs of industry that are currently demanded – the disruptive implications of 5G will be less profound in this case.

The answer to infrastructure requirements is defining the proposition:

“Things that move are good for 5G.”





TOPIC FOUR: BREXIT

The conversation concluded with a discussion on the likely implications for the IoT sector come Brexit, those in attendance definitively split over the impact that exiting the EU will have.

Whilst the final deal remains an uncertainty at this stage, it is likely that come March that British based IoT companies will face increased regulatory costs in regard to accessing both the services and physical infrastructure that is currently based in the EU.

One of the areas that it was suggested Brexit will have its biggest impact was in the supply chain, the efficiency and ease of integrating IoT supply chain systems before the consumer stage is going to become more difficult, and this means increased operational costs.


For start-ups, there may well be no implications regarding data flows, but costs attached to rewriting legal

frameworks and privacy policies could be substantial – the UK will need to incorporate EU laws into working documents and procedures in order to comply for cross border operations.

It was reiterated that despite the difficulties that the government has faced in negotiations with Brussels, it does remain in all parties' interests to form a Brexit deal that facilitates a healthy trading relationship moving forwards.

Negatively, Brexit could affect US companies that currently store data in the UK, these businesses are likely to reposition data to mainland Europe. Specific points were also raised that the British public had been wrongly led to fear large businesses/banks leaving the UK in favour of the EU – however we have not been seeing these mass relocations as predicted.

It was cited that Brexit may in fact present opportunity for IoT as Britain becomes a test bed for new



technologies and that the UK could aim to create a regulatory, legislative and enterprise space that benefits the sector.

In opposition to this perspective, it was argued that it would be wrong to think that London will sustain such a position of advantage come Brexit and that we are not seeing the relocations on account of the costs associated with moving senior teams. Yet, what the city is seeing, are jobs and positions going empty in the UK, and the replacements being hired in European offices – in the long term, this will be highly damaging for Britain.

The point was equally presented that service providers and large businesses now see Europe as a frictionless territory and with ease draw on resources from across EU states.

Brexit threatens to position the UK on the outside of this.

Finally, talent was given as an area where the UK has a particular competitive advantage when compared with its international counterparts and this will act to future proof the tech sector.

Increasing the provision of Master level apprenticeships would help to guarantee the talent pipeline of highly skilled individuals that have corporate experience.

CLOSING REMARKS

The advice was given that for Interxion to successfully engage with start-ups its approach must extend beyond the product offering and encompass, a 'start-up' friendly culture that is specifically designed for supporting early stage businesses.

