CIO 24/7 Podcast: Lync 2013 June 2015

Podcast Transcript

Accenture Managing Director, Chris Crawford with Accenture Managing Director Social Enterprise, Jason Warnke

Chris Crawford: Welcome to another edition of Accenture’s CIO 24/7 podcast. We bring you practical real-world insight on IT delivery and strategy straight from the leaders in Accenture’s internal IT department. I’m your host Chris Crawford and with me today is Jason Warnke, Accenture’s Social Enterprise lead to discuss Accenture’s Lync 2013 upgrade. Welcome Jason.

Jason Warnke: Thanks Chris.

Chris Crawford: So now I think that most of our listeners are familiar with Lync or Office Communicator but every organization may use different pieces of it. Can you give me and the listeners a quick rundown on the main features of Lync especially the ones that are in use here in Accenture?

Jason Warnke: Absolutely. So Lync has really started as Office Communicator in Accenture—just as a chat tool. Started with instant messaging and grew as a replacement for our phone and telephony systems. So it was instant messaging and audio calls that people would leverage the platform for. It has grown and evolved from there into video screen sharing, annotating, white boarding and those sorts of things. It has really grown from one or two different media to a whole host of things that people are used to integrating into a video call today that is quite a Podcast Transcript departure from the things that used to be on the platform as its sole source collaboration in the past.
Chris Crawford: Yeah those are the main use cases that I’m familiar with. I can’t imagine not using it today; it’s the first thing that starts up on my laptop in the morning. How is it changing, how do you see it changing the way that we work? What’s the real advantage here?

Jason Warnke: I think that the big thing that we are seeing is the move to mobile. Mobile first, mobile only, where the experiences—previously mentioned—are moving to mobile devices. So whether you are on an iPad or mobile phone, you can experience a multimedia meeting where you see people screen share, white board sessions, and video participants including yourself. I really see the main evolution of the platform moving to where people are experiencing all this richness in a mobile-first way. And when they get back to their laptop, get back to the big monitor, they can quickly and easily move the call across from the phone or mobile device to the laptop.

Chris Crawford: And that is a big advantage of the new 2013 version that we didn’t have before or is that an extension of some of the current capabilities?

Jason Warnke: That is in the mobile client for Microsoft Lync and it’s really the latest version that that richness of the experience is brought to us—the ability to connect to your calls. In the past, it has brought the ability to connect to your calls but that was just audio. Now they are bringing the full multimedia experience to the mobile app.

Chris Crawford: What else do we have to look forward to in a 2013 upgrade? Is it all mobile or is there other reliability improvements. What else is going on?

Jason Warnke: Absolutely. A big push on the performance side of the equation. So as we do more and more of this and we’ve got more congruent calls happening around the globe. There is greater need for us to have a high performing platform that is well distributed across an infrastructure worldwide. That was another key feature when moving to Lync 2013—major improvements on the Lync server side of things.

Chris Crawford: I see. One of the things I’ve noticed as an end-user is that Brady-bunch window on Lync. I can see multiple people talking at once now. It’s not just the single view.

Jason Warnke: Yeah the gallery view is really interesting.

Chris Crawford: Yes, that’s it.

Jason Warnke: It’s an experience that people have gotten used to in other things like Google Hangouts or even in Skype the consumer products of seeing all of the participants that have joined in on the meeting. Heads up in the previous version of this you only had speaker view and now you can actually see across the application all the participants including if you’re in a room that has the sort of panoramic view devices like roundtable. You can see the entire room spread across in a panoramic fashion so they can also be in that gallery view. It’s a really interesting experience to see all of the players in the discussion.

Chris Crawford: Yeah, you have to always remember that you are on camera now which is a little different from the old for me.

Jason Warnke: That’s right.

Chris Crawford: What about from a corporate perspective? I know that it is tough to measure benefits of these things. What sort of story are you telling the people that are footing the bill for these upgrades.

Jason Warnke: Absolutely. As you can imagine in the space of telephony and video collaboration or even audio collaboration it is a very costly endeavor especially in a company of our size. We actually did a close study on the cost avoidance on travel and also the cost savings of moving from other telephony systems. Global telephony architectures and infrastructures to Lync in a kind of fully virtualized environment is something that has dropped savings to the bottom line for sure. It is something that we continue to watch to see how that continues to see more of these features become available. It is easier for people to meet this way quickly. It definitely lessens the need for them to hop on aeroplanes and travel to have a discussion especially when you can do a lot of this in a collaborative mobile environment.

Chris Crawford: For sure. It certainly helps at least extend the time between the traveling that you need to do.

Jason Warnke: That’s right.

Chris Crawford: One last question, if you have a second here. Any particular things we should watch out for or people should watch out for if they are upgrading? Maybe even if they are doing a new installation of Lync.

Jason Warnke: Yeah, I think that the biggest thing that I would caution folks on is just the dependence on a very performant network system. So it’s the ability to do all the multimedia from video to audio to screen sharing and everything in between. It’s going to put a lot of stress on your networks. Copyright © 2015 Accenture All rights reserved. Accenture, its logo, and High Performance Delivered are trademarks of Accenture. You need to make sure that you are ready for that especially if you are doing a major deployment in the similar size to what we did with more than 350,000 people. So that is a key thing if you are going to roll out Lync 2013 and you are going to do so with all of the features turned
on for people to use. You need to make sure that you are ready from a network perspective as everyone flips the switch on their video and more of that starts to fill the pipes between locations will be a key consideration.

**Chris Crawford:** Yeah, even if you were doing a departmental roll out first of all you are going to get the advantages at scale but even then you are going to have to worry about the local LAN and just keeping up with everything. I can see where you are coming from that.

**Jason Warnke:** Absolutely. You have it.

**Chris Crawford:** All right. Thanks for sharing your insights today Jason

**Jason Warnke:** Absolutely. Glad to be here.

**Chris Crawford:** And thank you for joining us today for CIO 24/7. I’m Chris Crawford and be sure to subscribe for new editions as they come out about every other month. Thank you.