ENABLING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITH SECURE ENGAGMENT AND COLLABORATION

In 2007 Arizona State University Professor Karen Mossberger defined digital citizens as "those who use the Internet regularly and effectively." With the great advance of technology since 2007, and particularly the emergence in the workplace of a generation that has been digital from the time they were born, the definition of a digital citizen has also advanced.

Digital citizenry, circa 2017, is multi-faceted. Alex Benay, Government of Canada CIO, pinned down some of the qualities of digital citizens.[1]

- Active on social media, participating in virtually all forms of online communication;
- Don't see an "analog world" and "digital world" but merely "the world" as it is;
- Tackle problems through partnerships, networks, and non-linear approaches;
- See borders as fluid, non-rigid, at least compared to "non-digital" citizens; and
- Know the power of the collective and of collaborating with a wide range of people.

People's expectations of technology, and of the experience organizations offer them, have risen dramatically in recent years. Suddenly digital citizens abound, and this has driven a shift among businesses from services to engagement and the personalization of the experience. This gives security, once the heavyweight factor in most discussions around digital transformation (DX), a mission-centric, second viewpoint to contend with.

SECURITY IS SOMETHING BUT IT'S NOT EVERYTHING

"It's problematic that organizations are moving forward with online and mobility initiatives without a secure approach to supporting their staff, collaboration partners and customers/constituents," says Northern Micro Director, Patrick Donoghue. "Successful outcomes will depend on adopting purpose-built approaches to support and collaboration, designed with IT security in mind. It's about removing the barriers between people and partners within a secure construct."

Most organizations, mindful of bad actors in the age of ransomware, have made significant investments in their security. But given the high profile of recent hacks, there is the danger that organizations will forego innovation in favour of security — or as Benay puts it: "hide behind firewalls."
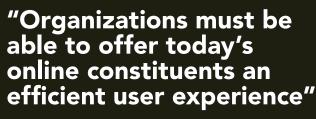
Experience suggests successful digital transformation is best pursued with balance in mind. While security is important, it cannot and should not obscure an organization's chief aim, which is to innovate and to establish a culture of collaboration and engagement.

MINUTES AND SECONDS

The pace of technological change has never been more intense, and this is forcing businesses to get on a faster track in everything they do. Speed is now a supreme differentiator[2], from how quickly organizations embrace new technologies to how quickly they can field customer inquiries, troubleshoot, and resolve issues.

A recent study by NuoDB[3] supports the idea of speed as difference-maker, finding that 68 per cent of organizations identify agility as a key DX initiative. A Forrester study[4] pushes speed from a different angle with its finding that over half of US online adults say they are likely to abandon an online interaction if they cannot get a speedy answer to a question. In the same study, 73 per cent said that the most important thing a company can do is to value their time.

"Organizations must be able to offer today's online constituents an efficient user experience," says Donoghue. "To remain engaged and relevant, the DX-minded enterprise thinks in terms of the self-service experience and "first call" resolutions. Digital citizens want what they want and satisfaction, with online enterprises, is inversely proportional to how hard they have to work to find an answer."

"Organizations must be able to offer today's online constituents an efficient user experience"

— *Patrick Donoghue, Director, Northern Micro*

GREAT SUPPORT, SECURE FOUNDATION

It is not uncommon for organizations with good or even great products and services to assume that the quality of what they offer will be enough to keep people happy and loyal, provided they try to offer decent customer support.

While it is true that customer satisfaction that comes from a great product or service cannot be beat, it can be undermined, and few things can undermine it more completely than poor support.

A study by Harris Interactive/RightNow found that 82 per cent of respondents said they stopped engaging with an organization because of a bad customer experience. The study presents other telling statistics:

- **Fifty-five per cent** became a customer of a company on the strength of its reputation for providing good customer service
- **Fifty-five per cent** would recommend a company because of its outstanding service, even more so than for its products or pricing
- **Ninety-five per cent** have taken action as a result of a negative experience, and 79 per cent have told others about it

Northern Micro's Remote Support solution satisfies the needs of today's digital citizen by removing barriers between business and client and between all service and support resources in a business. Making borders and geography irrelevant, Remote Support offers a set of features virtually unmatched among similar solutions:

- **Customer tech support**: chat, screen sharing, CRM integration, customizable surveys and support portals, and the ability to route issues based on support resource skills, no matter where in the world they are located
- **Monitor and audit**: ability to monitor support activity in real time, track customer satisfaction, record remote desktop sessions, and collect a detailed audit trail of each interaction
- **Internal IT support**: perform desktop support and server maintenance securely, and replace RDP, VNC, and other remote-control tools with a cross-platform support tool
- **Embeddables**: embedded chat, co-browsing, and screen sharing support in your website, desktops, programs, and mobile apps make it easy for customers and employees to get help
- **Help desk admin**: create queues, portals, teams, and policies – to standardize technical support services and manage technicians with integrated identity management and group policies

Northern Micro's **Remote Support** allows for shared sessions between technicians, developers, and even outside vendors, so they can get a clear look at issues and troubleshoot with a single mind. This "united front" approach results in issues being resolved in a shorter timeframe — an ideal outcome in the age of the digital citizen.

This brings us back to security, which even at a time when DX-minded organizations are trying to take down walls must not be neglected. In an "anytime, anywhere" BYOD environment, with people using multiple devices in and out of the office, security is no longer just a matter of cobbling together a firewall and antivirus defense. Verizon's 2016 Data Breach Investigations Report, which reported that "63 per cent of confirmed data breaches involved weak, default or stolen

passwords," tells us that organizations must make sure their password security is airtight.

Northern Micro is all too aware of the vulnerabilities organizations have at the passwords and credentials level. Its **Vault** solution attacks this vulnerability directly, shrinking a company's attack surface by tightening password security for both privileged users and IT vendors.

Vault gives organizations the ability to:
• Store, rotate and randomize privileged credentials;
• Discover and gain control of non-compliant passwords and privileged credentials; and
• Inject credentials into endpoints without exposing plain text passwords.

"Our Vault and Remote Support solutions enable security and support professionals to quickly and securely access remote systems and mobile devices," says Jean-Yves Lanctot, Solutions Architect, Northern Micro. "It delivers encrypted and auditable remote support for clients on and off the corporate network, and includes integrated privilege elevation so authorized support technicians do not require separate privileged accounts."
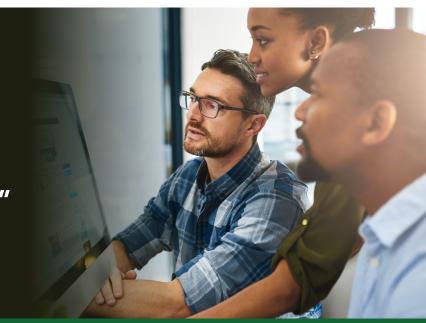
The solutions Northern Micro offers in the areas of remote support, access, and password management give organizations the flexibility and security they need to offer fast and efficient communication and collaboration. For digital citizens in a collaborative and hyperconnected world, this is an ideal scenario.

"We see continued pressure to improve cost efficiency and service levels," says Donoghue. "Our solutions in this area aren't just point products, but enable the foundation. We help organizations develop a culture of agility and open collaboration, with security and audit trail built in."

"Our solutions enable digital transformation."

"Our Vault and Remote Support solutions enable security and support professionals to quickly and securely access remote systems and mobile devices,"

— *Jean-Yves Lanctot, Solutions Architect, Northern Micro*

ABOUT NORTHERN MICRO

Organizations across Canada trust Northern Micro (northernmicro.com) to satisfy their unique IT requirements. From networking, database storage, data security to mobile and desktop computing devices, Northern Micro helps organizations deploy the best technology solutions. Northern Micro also addresses clients' specific IT needs with a wide range of top tier products, solutions and services — leaving them free to focus on organizational operations. Northern Micro's strategic partnerships with some of the leading names in the industry, including BOMGAR (bomgar.com), give clients access to the very best solutions available.

REFERENCES:

[1] "What is Digital Citizenship for Government?"
Alex Benay
https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-digital-citizenship-government-alex-benay/

[2] "If speed of change is the key competitive differentiator in digital transformation, how can you get out in front?"
Julien Courbe
https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/speed-change-key-competitive-differentiator-digital-how-julien-courbe/

[3] "Digital Transformation and Your Database"
http://go.nuodb.com/2016-database-report.html

[4] "Trends 2016: The Future of Customer Service"
https://www.forrester.com/report/Trends+2016+The+Future+Of+Customer+Service/-/E-RES61372