

## Powering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cities with the Internet of Things

A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER CONGRESSMAN DARRELL ISSA (R-CA)

**On Wednesday May 20, 2015 the Microsoft Innovation and Policy Center held panel discussion on the topic of powering 21st century cities with the internet of things (IoT). They focused on using data collected by the multitude of sensors available in the IoT to solve problems that modern cities face, and the roles that governments, industry, and non-profits can play in the innovation, procurement, and implementation of both products and policy. Keynote Speaker Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA) warned that Government would inhibit innovation if it misunderstands the technology, legislates beyond what is necessary, and gets in the way.**

Despite the IoT headline, panelists Dean Garfield, Dr. Caralynn Nowinski, Daniel Correa, Dan Hoffman, David Doll, und Joel Paque focused mostly on the data collection opportunities that IoT provides rather than on any one particular application of an IoT device. Common problems of sustainability that a city may have such as, energy deployment, waste and rainwater management or air quality, were all areas where the panelists believed cities could become more efficient with the use of IoT collected data. Solutions such as the deploying of "smart valves" on water management systems were given, but there was an understanding that the data available from individuals' personal devices such as thermostats, smart phones, and refrigerators is the next step in evolving cities and their management.

As these technologies emerge the question becomes who should be creating them, how should they be deployed, and what role do government administrations, industry, academics, and individuals play in the proliferation of these technologies and the corresponding data. The panel represented various stakeholder groups that are required to create a smart city. Dr. Caralynn Nowinski, Executive Director and Chief Operating Of-

fice of UI LABS, represented the non-profit sector that deals with creating a stakeholder network that can best address these questions. Dr. Nowinski was very vocal in pointing out that solutions and innovation need to be a collaborative effort, a sentiment which Daniel Correa, Senior Advisor for Innovation Policy in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy reiterated. Mr. Correa explained that the Federal government's role is to provide expertise to state and local governments as well as businesses as they pursue new policies and technologies.

Chief Innovation Officer for Montgomery County Maryland, Dan Hoffman, was the only public administrator present that was involved in the implementation of technology strategies at the municipal level, and therefore was able to provide a consumers perspective. While no producers of IoT products were present, aside from Microsoft hosting the event, all panelists agreed that in the end larger companies would need to address the needs of the consumers through the lens of solving larger problems. Mr. Hoffman also spoke of the fears harbored by the public against data collection, and identified it as a stumbling block for any large scale policy implementation. However, neither he nor any other panelists discussed the security issues inherent with the IoT.

Being an emerging technology, the IoT creates regulatory questions for Congress. For Congressman Darrell Issa these questions are best answered through education and limited government involvement. Congressman Issa, who himself led a highly successful career in the private technology sector, has co-founded the Congressional Caucus on the Internet of Things to help educate federal legislators on the technical aspects of this emerging technology, but also to pursue an agenda of limited government involvement as a means to promote technology. He believes that congress is to do what is necessary, but no more.

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Keeping with America's tradition of strong local control, the creation of a "smart city" will be driven by local and county governments as they work with those in the non-profit, academic, and business sectors to find solutions to their needs. The Federal Government's role will remain secondary, in so far as it creates the regulatory framework in which IoT technologies are innovated and implemented. This reality was reflected in the make-up of the panel and the general nature of Congressman Issa's comments.