

ALLIANCE FOR INNOVATION

BIG IDEAS

THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2016



ABOUT BIG IDEAS 2016

At the 2016 BIG Ideas conference, thought-leaders from local government, private sector, and academia convened to discuss the role of technology on our society. Over the course of a weekend, attendees were inspired by provocateurs to think about the ways sophisticated, emerging and inherently disruptive technologies are changing the way we view community and influencing how we design, plan, regulate, and even interact within our cities, counties, and towns. The conversation “reframed” disruptive technology, bringing it outside of the confines restricted to techies and fostered an atmosphere for creative thinking on the broad impacts disruptive technologies have and will to continue to have on our communities. Adaptation and the ability to face the challenges ahead straight on will determine our success.

On the following pages you will find a summary and analysis of what unfolded during the weekend. As with every BIG conference, the Alliance incorporates an outing to a regional attraction to counter the intensity of the discussions. This year, the Host Committee coordinated an entertaining dinner and animal encounters at the renowned Columbus Zoo on Saturday evening. These outings inject energy and allow for renewed focus as the conference segues to its Sunday morning conclusion. Please read on.



“THERE’S A TECHNOLOGY EVOLUTION
PRESENTING DIGITAL SOLUTIONS
BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY
YOU DECIDE YOUR OWN WAY
PEOPLE STILL CAUSE REVOLUTIONS.”

— LIMERICK BY PAM WEIR

Limerick challenge created by Dublin, OH Assistant City Manager, Michelle Crandall

REFRAMING DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Ingenuity and innovation have long been said to be trademarks of humanity. The ability to conjure novel solutions to unique challenges is an inherent part of the human experience. Invention has been the driver of society and the means for progress.

As time has moved on, the need to define advancements naturally emerged. Today, one of the primary ways we measure progress is through the advancement of technology, or the “application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes.” Advancements in technology can key economic growth, connect cultures, and generally improve quality of life. As with anything, though, technology comes with challenges. Technological advancements can, and have, fundamentally transformed the way we live, for better or for worse. Significant technological advancements are often categorized as disruptive technology, a term first coined in 1997 by Clayton M. Christensen and defined as “the phenomenon in which a new product is developed that displaces an established technology and shakes up the industry, or creates a completely new industry.” While the term disruptive technology was not verbalized until recently, the phenomenon has clearly existed much longer. One of the first recognizable examples of a disruptive technology, the printing press, was developed in the mid-1400s by Gutenberg. The introduction of the printing press dramatically impacted scribes across the world as the technology proliferated across the globe at a rapid rate. It increased accessibility to books and posed a great threat to a prominent industry of the time – scribing

– so much so that, according to some historical accounts, Sultan Bayezid II of the Ottoman empire, under pressure from the wealthy scribes, banned the technology¹. Of course, the ban was in vain as the technology spread across Europe and the rest of the world, transforming the way books were created and eliminating an industry of hand-writers. As is the case with disruptive technology, resistance is not unique. As new technologies threaten existing models of business, hesitance



and even rejection is natural. However, as we have learned, simply rejecting a new technology does not mean it will go away. Adoption will come as the need is realized or the market bears. And often, the role of managing the impacts of these disruptions falls squarely on the shoulders of government.

What is interesting is that many of the technologies that are integral to our daily lives were not born out of necessity, or as a known necessity. In fact, many of the most disruptive technologies were initially met with skepticism or completely dismissed as plausible tools. Why? And why do so many technological innovations pose such significant challenges for integration in our society? One of the primary influencing factors is the immediate economic impact: people see the emerging technology as a threat to their industry, potentially putting them or their constituents out of a job. While this is a very real concern, time and again we have seen that when a new technology emerges, a new industry is created to support it. So why does the initial fear pose such an obstacle and hinder the adoption of new technologies? The director for

center of Robotics at the University of Edinburgh, David Lane, says, “Do you know a disruptive technology when you see it? The answer is no because the technology is going to market to address a

set of requirements which may not yet exist.”² Contained within this comment from Professor Lane are multiple questions: how do you identify a disruptive technology? What does this technology seek to address? How will this new technology impact us? What does this new technology mean for existing industry? And how do we manage this new technology, from a safety, ethical, and practical perspective? At BIG Ideas, attendees discussed these questions and more. How do we identify the requirements a new

¹ The exact reasoning for the ban is one of much debate, with some arguing he banned it at the request of the clergy and wealthy elite who, because they were literate, controlled the translation of the oral history to text.

technology seeks to address? What obstacles or barriers exist? But to start, where the heck even are we?

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGING ITS GROWTH

With all the new technology that has emerged over the past 10 to 20 years, it can be difficult to filter through the minutiae and identify what are, or could soon be, the truly disruptive, transformative technologies, and figure out the impacts they may have on our communities and local government. Our opening panel at BIG Ideas helped set the table for the conversation that would guide us over the coming days. While the volume of new technology that is emerging rapidly is significant, some are of greater interest to local government than others. Moreover, these new technologies present unique and significant challenges in how we will integrate them in our communities, leverage their capacities, and regulate the moral, ethical, and practical implications they have. In fact, many of the so-called disruptive technologies are part of greater concepts and new “spaces” created by these technologies. Over the recent years we have seen an explosion of new technologies that have caused local governments many headaches and required rapid response to regulatory and even public access questions.

One of the most prevalent examples of a new technological space can be seen in the emergence of the shared economy – which includes disruptive technologies such as Uber and Airbnb driven by access to data and regulated by identifying where the most public good be derived. As products like Uber and Airbnb become more integrated and more business models of their type emerge, how we manage the public governance required to handle them will become a more pressing concern. As Arizona State University Professor and Director for the Center for Urban Innovation David Swindell said, “The challenge is dealing with the ownership of data. Who owns the information?” This question will be key in productively controlling growth industries like the shared economy. As he pointed out, Alliance for Innovation and ICMA have researched service delivery, looking at how local



governments can leverage the technologies that exist for the public good. However, it is a challenge. Large jurisdictions have more resources to harness the power of the shared economy than smaller ones. Nonetheless, as Professor Swindell says, “local leaders have a unique opportunity to provide access to these types of services.”

Access to these types of services is not always to the benefit of the community. Betsy Fretwell, City Manager of Las Vegas, NV highlighted the rapid adoption of Airbnb has resulted in the need for swift, decisive action from the City. Because the city of Las Vegas relies heavily on the revenue generated from hotels, Airbnb’s presence has had an outsized impact on the City.



Without any regulation, the City faced an inherent challenge. Reconciling the desires of tourists to have accessibility and autonomy in choosing where to stay when visiting the City, weighted against the needs of hotels to remain profitable and generate tax revenue for the City. Without wanting to completely eliminate Airbnb from the City, but also not wanting to put the hotel industry at a competitive disadvantage, they had to act swiftly. To help mitigate the balance, in 2014, the City Council passed an ordinance requiring property owners who rent out their residential properties on a short-term basis to obtain a \$500 annual license. While Las Vegas is a unique case, their example serves as an example of the type of disruption and consequent impact shared economy technologies can have on a city.

The shared economy technologies are far from the only disruptive technologies creating significant challenges for jurisdictions. Companies like Google and Tesla have made significant

“TECHNOLOGIES ARE BEING DEMOCRATIZED.”

DUSTIN HAISLER, CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER, E.REPUBLIC

² <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/futureofengineering/article4744272.ece>



investments and strides in autonomous vehicles. Autonomous, or self-driving vehicles, fit into the larger equation of a growing “unmanning” or unmanned vehicles. While we have long been privy to the federal government’s use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) – drones – for their use in combat areas, unmanned vehicles have made their way into the consumer conversation. Both autonomous cars and UAVs pose separate, but equally imminent, questions. As autonomous vehicles become more of a reality, especially on the consumer level (Uber, for example, is piloting a fleet of autonomous cars in Pittsburgh), new regulatory, safety, and planning questions come into play.

Like with the shared economy, the role of state and local government will be a significant question. If autonomous vehicles become a mainstay, governments will have to deal with issues around the potential lost revenue from traffic tickets. As a benefit, autonomous vehicles will be designed and put to use only if they demonstrate safety and compliance with local, state, and federal laws. This could mean a significant loss of revenue for local governments like traffic and parking infractions. Similarly, UAVs are already creating a plethora of regulatory questions for governments. Who controls the airspace where personal drones fly? What safety mechanisms can be put into place to mitigate collisions or line of sight issues? While the FTA has introduced guidelines, they are sparse and loosely enforced. How will the roles be carved out to ensure local control and how will

enforcement work? There are many questions and few answers right now, but with the rate of adoption, local governments must be thinking about the implications these technologies create.

Of course, not all implications of UAVs and autonomous vehicles lie in the consumer arenas and not all are negative. They could also create a host of opportunity for local government – what would a fleet of publicly owned autonomous vehicles look like? How could that benefit a local government from a cost savings and safety perspective?

What benefits can law enforcement gain from using UAVs to monitor crowds or help with other safety concerns? While the private sector is often the first to introduce and apply technologies like these, it does not mean that local government can – or should – sit idly by and see what unfolds. Instead, local governments should be investigating how they leverage UAVs and autonomous vehicles for the public’s benefit.



Yet another rapidly emerging, potentially significantly disruptive technology lies in the development of more intelligent applications, generally centered around the concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI) or machine learning. What makes AI so interesting and also difficult to talk about is its complexities. AI is not simply “one thing” like you could argue an autonomous vehicle is. Rather, it is a component that helps conceptualize, create, and improve technologies that exist. AI is infiltrating all parts of our lives – from the apps we use on our phones that are collecting data about us to creating new technologies and improving existing ones. And all of this AI is built around algorithms. Algorithms are, as Arizona State University Professor Kevin DeSouza argues, the key to our future. As he says, “We need for the next generation to

“THERE ARE ECONOMIC AND CIVIC DISRUPTIONS IN THE WORLD. HOW IS DIGITAL GOING TO MAKE IT BETTER AND NOT WORSE?.”

PEGGY MERRISS, CITY MANAGER, DECATUR, GA

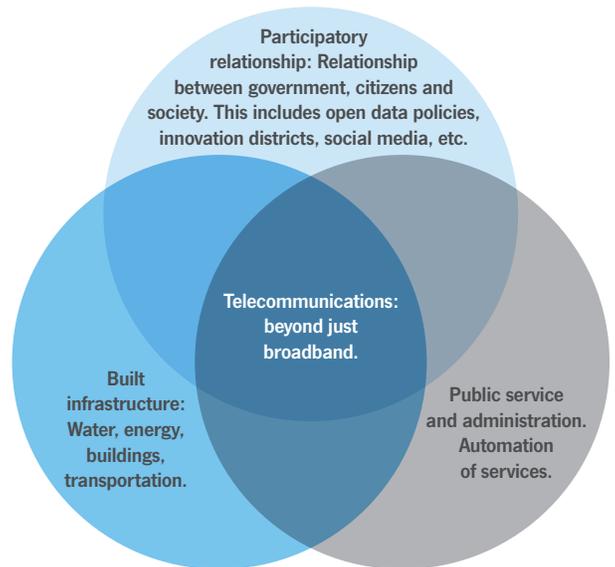
learn algorithms to test and design the best strategies. Current and future algorithms can disrupt everything.” Algorithms and AI are inextricably linked to the many new technological “spaces” that are emerging. As Dr. DeSouza says, “Uber doesn’t own cars, they’re making money off of data.” As companies continue to collect more and more data, these algorithms will continue to learn and the impact they can have is astonishing. We have already seen the increasing importance of AI in the burgeoning Internet of Things (IoT), where everyday applications are connected to the Internet, resulting in the collection of troves of data that governments (or industries) can use to make data-driven decisions and plan for the future. Some argue that the success of IoT is tethered to the application of AI and its ability to process the massive amounts of data generated, and is the next wave of technology.³



SO YOU WANT TO BE SMART?

As algorithms evolve, AI becomes more intelligent, and we collect more data, the opportunity to build smarter, more connected communities will heighten. Simply put, the more connected we are to technology, the more governments can harness the capacity of technology to plan and design community in a more deliberate fashion. This notion of a connected, technologically integrated city is often referred to as “Smart.” But what actually IS a “smart city?” As Peter Torrellas of Siemens joked, a smart city is whatever “the last vendor who walked out of your office told you it was.” Within the joke, though, lies an element of truth: the concept of smart cities is still in its infancy. While it may

be in its infancy from the perspective of implementation, the concept of smart cities can be fleshed out, according to Peter, as a diagram including:



So while Smart Cities may still not be fully operational, the idea of embedding the Internet of Things into the built environment is already under way. Companies like Cisco and IBM are investing significant sums of money into developing data-driven solutions to transportation, waste management, law enforcement, and energy. According to a 2015 article from *Forbes*, some think that by 2020 we will be investing \$400 billion annually in building these smart cities.⁴ Whether that number turns out to be accurate or not, it is clear that the smart city movement is gaining momentum.

But as smart cities become part of our everyday vocabulary, questions arise around how we are planning the built environment. With the growth of the Internet of Things, the role of machine learning, and greater capacity for data-driven decision making evolving, the need to plan for the infrastructure required to harness the available technology is accelerated. The issue is a challenging one. With the rapid pace of innovation and change, Betsy Fretwell, Las Vegas, NV City Manager, asked, “How much should we be designing our infrastructure for this new technology?”

A great example of the infrastructure conversation is captured when talking about automated vehicles. Our roads are structured

³ <https://www.wired.com/insights/2014/11/iot-wont-work-without-artificial-intelligence/>

⁴ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2015/05/19/how-big-data-and-the-internet-of-things-create-smarter-cities/#3a1525cd63d8>

in such a way to support human drivers, how do we plan for a future of autonomous vehicles, which would not, in theory, have the same traffic easement needs as human-driven traffic. Attendees discussed the possibility of fixed routes for driverless cars and public fleets, while understanding that you can't just plan for future when we are still constrained by our current reality. People still drive and autonomous vehicles will not come about overnight. We need to plan for the future while accommodating the present. Essentially, the infrastructure question requires long-range thinking with short-term practicality.

CREATING CONNECTIVITY

Of course, all of the planning and design will be for naught if we are not able to address the issue of connectivity. While we are obviously more connected than we have ever been, availability and accessibility of communication tools remains an issue. One of the overarching conversations at BIG Ideas involved the idea of broadband as the 4th utility. One of the core components of building smart cities and the infrastructure to support it relies on people having reliable access to Internet. Though many jurisdictions offer broadband access in public spaces, most citizens still connect to the Internet through a third-party, for-profit entity. And while some argue the barriers to entry make the possibility remote, other jurisdictions have explored, and in some cases created, municipally-owned broadband.

“THINK OF THE COMMUNITY BENEFIT OF WIPING OUT 80% OF CAR CRASHES— THAT’S WHAT CONNECTED VEHICLES CAN DO FOR US.”

BETSY FRETWELL

Sandi Seader of Longmont, CO shared her city's experience in bringing the proposal to create municipal broadband to their constituents – twice – and ultimately succeeding, even in the face of strong opposition. As a part of the build out of their electric utility in 1997, a fiber ring was built. Not wanting to waste the opportunity, the City decided to start looking at public private partnerships to leverage this connectivity and data pipe. It was not without trials and tribulations. In 2005, the Colorado state legislature banned municipalities from providing broadband directly to citizens. They were able to find compromise with the

³ <https://www.wired.com/insights/2014/11/iot-wont-work-without-artificial-intelligence/>



legislature and got the legislation amended to allow for municipal broadband, but only if the citizens vote for it. So in 2009, Longmont put the question on the ballot. The incumbent provider spent huge amounts of money to contest the election, running a campaign saying “No blank check” should be given to the City. The “No” vote won out because the community didn't know what it meant. After it failed, residents of Longmont got together, realizing how important the Internet was for the community, and put the work in to get the initiative put back on the ballot in 2011. Once again, the incumbent provider campaigned against it, dumping more money into the race. But with a now educated public, their opposition failed and the measure passed, allowing the City to then move towards proposing, and subsequently passing, a \$45 million bond in 2013. Now, the Longmont offers 1 gigabyte Internet for \$49 per month.

Sandi Seader said that the City learned a lot in the process from studying successful examples of municipal broadband like Chattanooga, TN. She challenged the attendees that if Longmont can do it, why can't others? She encouraged jurisdictions to leverage their access and their unique position to become the provider of the 4th utility, broadband.

While creating affordable, accessible broadband should be a primary goal for jurisdictions, the issue of connectivity fits into the larger equation of building smarter cities. A large amount of data is being collected by various applications, but without mechanisms in place to connect the disparate sources of data, what value does it all have? Coleman Keane of the Electric Power Board with the City of Chattanooga, TN argued that the connectivity issue does not end once the broadband issue has been solved. Once Chattanooga had solved the broadband question, they asked, “what now?” Looking towards the future,

“COLLABORATION IS A KEY TO CONNECTIVITY.”

they took the approach on becoming “smart.” They decided they didn’t want to be a stagnant entity providing a singular service; instead, Coleman said, they wanted to build an intelligent system. Ultimately, they created a self-healing grid, systems that communicate with one another and collect massive amounts of data it can use to fix itself. For him, though, this was not the goal, and still isn’t the endgame. Coleman’s approach embraced the process of connectivity – with citizens, engineers, and anyone else who would partner with them. Educate the citizens on what you are providing and why it should matter to them. Partner with everyone you can – they have partnered with the Department of Energy and take in all engineers they can to look for the next challenge and improvement they can make.

Similar to the adoption of disruptive technologies, creating connectivity can be an incremental, challenging undertaking. From the direct – providing accessible, affordable broadband solutions, to the indirect – creating connections towards making a smart city or building relationships within your community, connectivity is a fundamental issue we must tackle. Further parallels exist as the ability to connect, create smarter cities, and encourage adoption of disruptive technologies, requires the ability to communicate and engage your community. Technology is a means to a solution, but not the answer itself. So how do we translate this on local, national, or global levels?

PEOPLE & COMMUNITY MATTER

We addressed the conversation around the specific disruptive technologies likely to impact local government, as well as the infrastructure and connectivity issues that will leverage their capacities, but how does this fit into the broader context of our communities? How do we get buy-in from communities and why should people care?

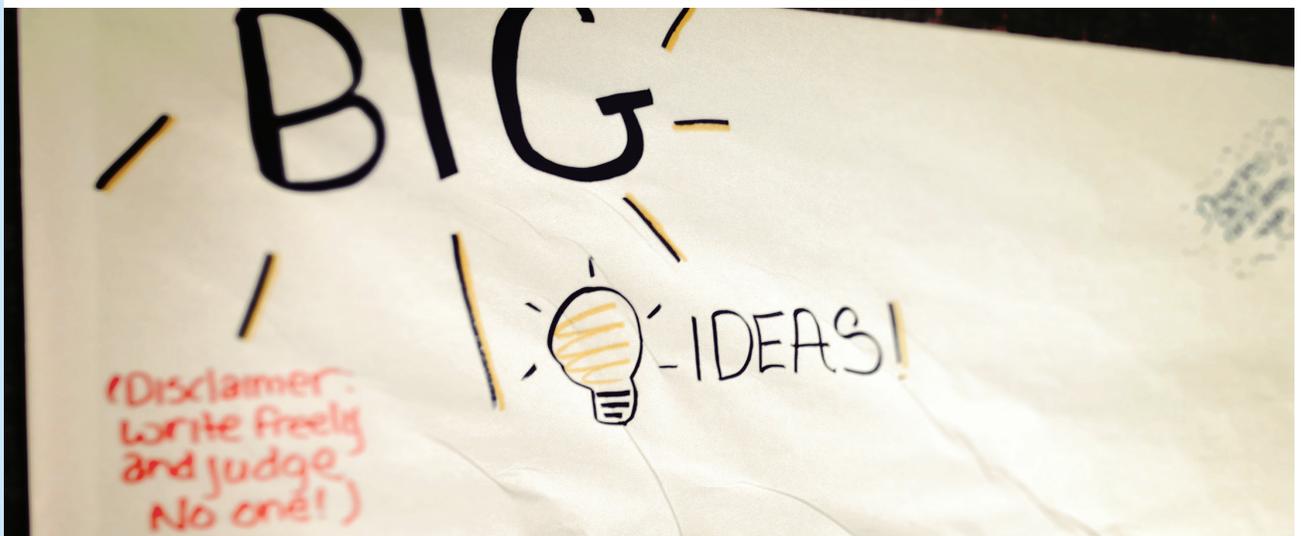
“PROBLEMS ARE THE SAME EVERYWHERE; BIG, SMALL, AMERICA OR UKRAINE. THEY ARE ALL ABOUT PEOPLE IN THE END. BUT WILL THEY BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IS THE KEY QUESTION.”

IRINA FURSMAN

Over the course of the BIG weekend, the connection of technology to the very people it affects was a recurring theme. Given the technologies we speak about, their reliance on data collection and the actors from whom the data will be collected, the way local governments educate and engage their citizens is critical to creating buy-in. While specific engagement methods with people may vary based on geography or

culture, people naturally share the same problems. People want access to technology that makes life easier and addresses their own challenges.

In truth, many of the emerging technologies local governments would benefit from will require significant changes in people’s behavior. At times, there may be both real benefit for the citizens and perceived negative impact. With the example of autonomous vehicles, travel will be much safer and likely much faster. Moreover, with the average car owner spending 25% of their income on transportation, there stands to be significant cost savings. But



many people, especially in North America, enjoy driving. How do we communicate to citizens the benefits without threatening their freedom of choice? In those instances, where there would be less natural opposition for adoption of a new technology, it is important to start small and work collaboratively. As Coleman Keane said, you should have “intentional conversations” that never end. While seeking out the private sector may seem like the easiest route, collaborating with non-profits or citizens can be a path forward.

An obstacle and opportunity emerging in community engagement is how the very concept of community has evolved. As the means for communication has evolved, the notion of the traditional community has been upended. Communities are no longer bound by geography or limited interest – a community for nearly everything you could imagine can and probably does exist on the Internet. The notion of borderless communities fundamentally transforms our ability to reach people with shared goals and ideals.

TRUST & EQUITY IN A DIGITAL AGE

So what is the role of government in regulating spaces such as the shared economy, unmanned, AI, and other forms of technology? This fundamental question calls to bear where government fits into the equation and the amount of control government can have, and the level of control citizens believe the government should have.

Mistrust in government is an ever-present impediment. Ironically, as Kevin DeSouza pointed out, most of us blindly trust technology, even to the point of giving it (or its developers) access to some of our most personal details. Though it is not often a conscious decision we may make, when applications on our phone or computer request permission to access our files, camera, GPS, contacts, etc., without hesitation we agree. Rarely do most people stop to think about what kind of information they are giving out and even more rarely do they know the purposes for which that information will be used. As Alliance President Karen Thoreson noted, “Do people trust their technology more than they do their government? We need to rethink the word trust. Maybe they don’t trust the technology, but love it.”

The question of why government lacks trust has roots that cannot be easily explained. It is a trickle-down effect from the current political environment, which is daunting to overcome. As Tansy Hayward, Assistant City Manager in Raleigh, NC said, the

public sector generally has good intentions. So what complicates matters, she asks? In her view, it is possible that the regulatory, enforcement environment could lead people to question things such as data collection. People may assume that the government is collecting traffic data to use for speeding violations or other infractions. Tansy suggests that local governments must choose where and how data is applied with careful consideration. Local government needs to capture what it is that makes people accepting of the technology they love. As Karen Thoreson put it, “Technology gives people what they want at the right time. How do we make government do that?” It is a simple question with no easy answer.



The need to build trust is a key determiner for local government's ability to implement new technologies, but once government gains that trust, how do we ensure that we are operating ethically and morally? While many of the applications that will be in use will come from the private sector, it is incumbent upon government to ensure that data is collected and transmitted in a secure manner. Beyond that, government will be tasked with curtailing potential breaches of data by installing robust security mechanisms. In an age where information is shared more freely than ever, though, how do we define ethical use and application? Kevin DeSouza argues that ethics, “when it comes to next generation algorithms, is not assumed but generated.” How will this look?

Beyond restoring and building public trust and operating in morally, ethically conscious ways, government has an obligation to ensure that access to technology is equitable. Again, how this plays out is not entirely clear. One path forward for government is

to help level the playing field. According to a recent report, over 45 million Internet connections in America have download speeds that fall below the FCC's classified definition of broadband – 25 mbps.⁵ With readily available, affordable broadband, government can help bridge the gap of accessibility and connectivity. But how far should government go?

REMODEL OR REBUILD: THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Technology is expanding at such a rapid rate that legislating it across all levels of government has proved to be a daunting task. In the case of many new technologies, it is difficult to regulate before the market has taken shape. Sometimes, the rules in place do not make sense given the way society has progressed. As Betsy Fretwell, the City Manager of Las Vegas, said, “Uber and Lyft basically thumbed their noses at the rules and won. I think you’re going to see a lot more of that kind of activity, where defense of the existing systems doesn’t make sense anymore.” They didn’t approach it in the correct way, but it still didn’t justify governments protecting outdated regulations. What can local governments do to prevent that kind of “takeover” from happening? David Swindell suggests that governments “take a more proactive role and help design standards. They need to take a sandbox approach.”

⁵ <http://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2016/12/millions-in-us-still-living-life-in-internet-slow-lane/>

With the rapid speed at which technology adoption is taking place, government being an active participant will mitigate challenges down the road. Even so, government policymaking was designed to be a slow deliberate process. As Charlie Duggan, Auburn, AL City Manager suggested, when laws are made too quickly, it causes a mess. So how is it possible to accelerate the lawmaking process so that it keeps up with the speed of technology without making a mess along the way?

Mike Sable, Director of Facility Services with Hennepin County, MN offered one area a county could act as a provider or regulator by managing the relationship between humans and AI. Perhaps one of the questions most intrinsic with regards to the role of government is that of the “last provider.” Is this an area where local government should feel compelled to step in? Is it government’s role, where nobody else is willing, to act as the “last provider?”

Many agree that the role of government is to help even the playing field, but to what extent and at what cost? And with the rise of new technologies and unforeseen consequences, who will take the role of regulation? When the private sector is creating applications and putting them into use, how far does government go to intervene or manage outcomes? What does that regulation look like?

There are plenty of questions in regards to government role, but what is clear is that we must be active participants.



CLOSING THOUGHTS

BIG Ideas 2016 offered a unique opportunity for local government, academia, and private sector to discuss the present and future of disruptive technology. Over the course of the weekend attendees covered many of the emerging technologies, investigated the future of connected, smart cities, debated the role of government, and explored the relationship government will have in bringing these new technologies to their communities. The weekend conversation was not held with the expectation of finding answers to all of the unique questions technological innovations like machine learning and autonomous vehicles bring to light. In many cases, the conversation resulted in more

questions, but always provided stimulating insight in a thought-inspiring environment, free from traditional conference confines of take-home lessons learned and neatly packaged products.

What can be taken away is that technology will continue to disrupt the status quo and likely at an accelerated rate. It is up to local government to position itself at the table. Whether it is on the road towards building smart cities, planning to provide broadband as a utility, or acting as an intermediary between private companies and the public's data, challenges will arise. Amidst the challenges and risks lies great opportunity. As Matt Lesh of Local Motors said, "The Future is bright, we just have to steer it in the right direction."

In February 2017, access a toolkit to launch the conversation about disruptive technology in your community at www.transformgov.org under the OnDemand tab.

"TECH IS NEUTRAL, BUT KNOWLEDGE IS A COMMODITY."

LOU ZACHARILLA, INTELLIGENT COMMUNITY FORUM



PLAYING HARD AT THE COLUMBUS ZOO WHILE CONTEMPLATING DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY – 10/29/2016



GOING FORWARD

BIG Ideas inspires and motivates us to think outside the crisis de jour – the complaint of the moment. It takes us to a place where we more often ask “Why,” “How,” and “With What Result?”

While it might be tough to understand how to use the ideas you garnered at BIG, I hear that most attendees head home musing about just that: how does this make me see things I look at every day in a different way?

BIG 2017 will be no different. Set in Raleigh, NC from October 6 – 8, we will take on the questions that have challenged local governments and

their state and federal counterparts: How, and can, local government legislate social justice and equity standards in their own community?

This topic is specially selected for NC given HB 2. Our weekend will look at the right, commitment, and opportunities for local government to impact the rights of their citizens – both in the mainstream and the fringe of their communities.

If you care about local government freedoms and responsibilities – this is the weekend to join your colleagues and others to discuss a path forward.

“THE ALLIANCE FOR INNOVATION
WILL STRETCH YOUR IMAGINATION
SO COME ONE COME ALL
NO BIG IDEA IS TOO TALL
IT’S A GOVERNMENT NERD’S VACATION!”

– LIMERICK BY PAM WEIR

Limerick challenge created by Dublin, OH Assistant City Manager, Michelle Crandall

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October 6 – 8 | Raleigh, NC



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