

Social networking among IT executives

Top 10 tech trends to watch in 2011

—synthesized by Courtney Cooper

So, what exactly do top IT executives talk about when they meet? They talk about technology and business and how these issues can affect their companies. Not surprisingly, a mix of technology and business topics made this year's list of the Logicalis (www.us.logicalis.com) second annual study. Also not surprisingly, social networking, the mode by which executives increasingly use to interact with each other and their company's staff, is in itself a trend featured among the top tech trends for 2011 identified by this year's **Logicalis study**.

1. **Cloud computing.** Cloud computing has become a huge buzz word in the industry, but if you peel back the marketing fluff and hype, it is a mechanism for delivering and consuming IT as a service. Whether that "IT as a service" is infrastructure, platform, or software, it is just another way for an IT organization to deliver the technology necessary to run an organization's business.
2. **HR issues.** This year's surprise? Social media discussions included a wide range of topics that affect IT managers daily, including Internet usage policies, recruitment, retention, motivation, conflict resolution, and general staff management.
3. **Time management.** Recognizing that time is the only commodity they can't replace or replenish, IT executives indicated in a multitude of conversations that they were feeling "overworked," "understaffed," and "spread too thin."
4. **Company direction and planning.** IT executives are focusing their attention beyond technology, and their conversations indicate they are looking at the overall corporate strategy.
5. **IT security.** An evergreen topic of conversation is the security and privacy of corporate infrastructure and data.
6. **Software management, licensing, maintenance, and purchasing.** As IT executives embrace new methods of consuming software as a service, they are questioning existing software paradigms.
7. **Social media.** As a sign that they become more comfortable with social media, technology executives have adopted it for attending conferences, sharing insight, and asking for peer guidance on a wide range of topics, including how to create and enforce policies related to social media usage. However, IT executives are concerned about security, privacy and the risk of viruses introduced via social media.

8. **Mobile technology.** Despite concerns over securing and managing devices in the workplace they don't control, IT executives recognize that the rapid adoption of smart mobile device platforms (Android, Apple, Blackberry), combined with the undesirable expense of employee computing, has created a perfect storm for a mobile computing renaissance. Slimmed-down, low-cost, desktop-replacement mobile applications are making their way out of the app store and into the enterprise.

9. **Network and system maintenance.** Globalization and a change in job requirements and focus is causing IT executives to rethink how and where they deploy their staff. Strategic outsourcing of non-core IT tasks is in vogue, and savvy IT executives will continue assessing the impact and freedom it can provide.

10. **Jobs and career related discussions.** As IT executives adapt to new business directions and adopt the latest technologies, they are becoming aware of changes in the nature of their own careers. It's not "business as usual" for IT executives. It's not only about watching what the technology does. They are seeing a greater emphasis on business acumen, strategy, and tactics enabled by technology. They also see a future where all IT spending will have to be justified by building realistic, financially sound business plans.

"The list shows that technology executives are discussing much more strategic topics than they did last year. This is indicative of the greater acceptance of social networking as well as the new speed of doing business—technology managers value their peers' thoughts and they need input quickly as they make decisions," said Lisa Dreher, Logicalis vice president of Business Development. As they did last year, Logicalis will use this information to help the company better serve its customers. For other businesses, the Logicalis list may serve as a reminder to evaluate their own needs [or otherwise] of social networking.

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