

## INNOVATION

## New forum seeks to unite 100 cities in standards to drive smart city innovation

TM Forum has formed a collaboration of seven cities to push creation of smart cities through open data sharing and standardization. The goal is to have more than 100 cities participating.

By Teena Maddox | March 9, 2016, 2:05 PM PST

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The Smart City Forum is a newly launched collaboration of TM Forum members that consists of seven cities working to help drive the creation of smart cities worldwide.

The initial cities with members in the new forum's leadership are: Los Angeles; Lisbon, Portugal; Dublin, Ireland; Vancouver; Atlanta; Bristol, U.K.; and Toronto. Eventually the forum plans to include members from more than 100 smart cities and governments around the world. TM Forum is an organization with 950 member companies that work to bring

about global standards to the telecommunications business and it's broadening to include the Internet of Things (IoT), smart health, smart climate and smart cities.

"We've formed a leadership team with seven cities," said Carl Piva, vice president of strategic programs at TM Forum. "Academia is invited to be part of that. And other ecosystem partners that deliver solutions into the smart city domain. It will all be driven by the needs and requirements of these cities."

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The smart city industry is projected to be a \$400 billion market by 2020, with 600 cities around the globe expected to generate 60% of the world's GDP by 2025, according to McKinsey research.

There will be a huge digital divide between the cities that take these innovative steps, such as Atlanta, compared to other cities that resist change. Those cities will fall behind within a couple of years, Piva said.

The Smart City Forum will try to combine the knowledge of leaders from around the globe and utilize the things

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that work in other cities, creating a sort of global app store of application and utilization that will be available to everyone, Piva said.

### Atlanta's smart city initiative

The city of Atlanta was a natural fit for the new forum, said Samir Saini, commissioner and CIO for Atlanta.

"For Atlanta, we sort of accidentally fell into the smart city initiative. We were already doing things in the city that you could argue fall under the smart city umbrella," Saini said.

He breaks down the three main activities in Atlanta that make it a smart city, calling it the three C's: capture, communication and crunch. "We capture what hardware, devices and sensors we're employing to collect data; the second piece is communication and what we're doing to transmit information; the third C is crunch. What we're doing on the big data side to analyze the data we're receiving to make more informed decisions, predictive or descriptive."

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"On the capture side, all in all, we're in pilot mode, like most cities. This is a new area, standards haven't been defined. Old cities, and startups, are getting into the game. We're trying a lot of things to see what works and what doesn't work, and build governance and standards so that whatever we build is future proof and the outcomes are realized for improving the city," Saini said.

His hope is that the innovation being used in Atlanta can benefit other cities. "This nation is just a bunch of cities at the end of the day. We really want to make an impact for the nation. This has got to be feasible and easy to deploy for any city small or large. That's

really the end goal. If it's just 10 cities, then that's great for those cities. But what about the rest of the country," Saini said.

Other cities might not have the resources to add smart innovation. The forum will work to develop recommendations on how those cities can work within urban incubators and learn things such as how to structure a partnership with the private sector to create opportunities for innovation.

"At the end of the day we can make all the greatest plans in the world, but if resources aren't available to implement them, it doesn't really matter," Saini said.

Open data is one of the keys to drive innovation, he said. "Make this information public. Make it available in a form that can be easily digested and accessed and leveraged."

### **Standardization is key to smart city success**

Esmeralda Swartz, head of strategy and marketing of the software business unit for Ericsson, is a member of TM Forum. She said the various innovations all center around the recognition that there needs to be standardization to drive interoperability among the IoT components of a smart city.

"This is based on the notion that anything that can be connected will be connected, but it's not all going to come from one supplier. The interaction and interoperational ability between, for instance, manufacturers and software providers and the ability to drive that interoperability is important. From the context of TM forum, it's how do we help our members understand what the issues are concerning this, and how do we as an industry drive forward to drive these solutions to the marketplace because one single vendor won't have it all."

"We need to ensure that you have the ability to interact across all these devices. It's not a closed wall ecosystem. That's an important point. It's not the closed wall garden that existed in the past. It's not just a single device. It's working across devices, across manufacturers. Those need to come together to drive this marketplace experience," Swartz said.

And once all of those components are in place, it will quickly push innovation in smart cities.

"Cities are doing these things to a large extent, a little bit in isolation, so I think the bigger scheme that we could benefit from here is to sort of unleash innovation in one city and use it in another," Piva said. "Innovation can travel by the speed of light between cities if you can unleash something in Chicago and use it in Los Angeles."

TM Forum is hosting a flagship [smart cities event in Nice, France in May](#)

(<http://www.tmforumlive.org/>) where smart city experts from around the world will meet to focus on the innovation challenges around the globe.

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### About Teena Maddox

Teena Maddox is a Senior Writer at TechRepublic, covering hardware devices, IoT, smart cities and wearables. With a background in fashion writing at People and W magazines and WWD, she ties together the style and substance of tech.

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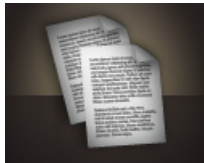
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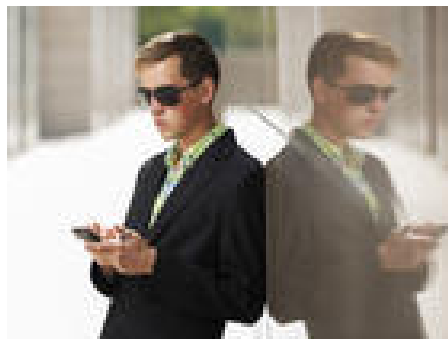


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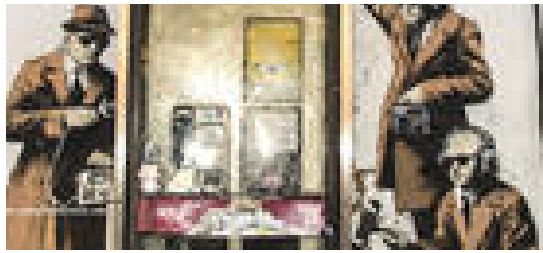


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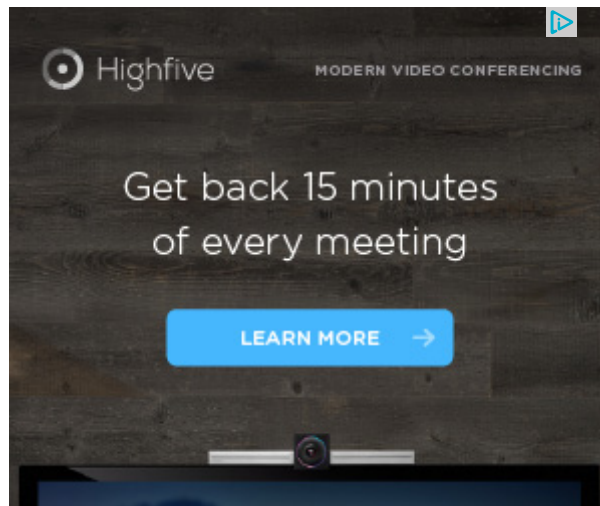




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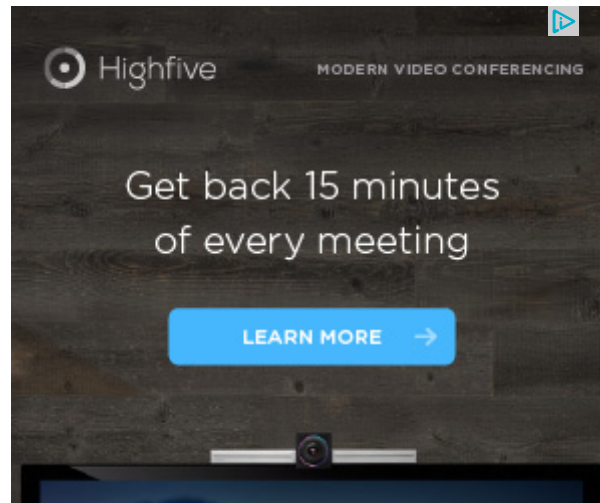


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