



# Technology Flash...

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## Microsoft Build: Opportunities taken, opportunities lost

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Microsoft is holding its annual developer Build conference, and Satya Nadella took the lead in opening the event with his usual keynote address. Overall, there were some very compelling announcements made, and I am quite impressed with where Nadella is taking Microsoft. Its new focus is setting it on a path for a great future. I'm not sure I would have said that 3 years ago.

Some of the most compelling announcements revolved around the coming Anniversary Edition of Windows 10 which should be available later this summer and free to all users of current Windows 10. Included will be an integrated authentication capability extended through the Edge browser and available to web apps. Fully integrated inking capability and an SDK that allows frictionless use of the pen in apps, aided by Cortana and cognitive services to take inking to new levels of usefulness. Many more hooks into Cortana to make integration of concierge services accessible by apps and make computer functions much more human-friendly. A really big capability for enterprises in particular - providing a desktop app converter to take legacy apps and enable them with the modern user interface to emulate a universal app. This alone will be a major boon to enterprise adoption of Windows 10 based mobility (mostly on tablets where our research shows that enterprises really want to use Windows based devices). A major impact in AR/VR/3D solutions were enabled through the imminent release of HoloLens a breakthrough product for Microsoft. And finally, a series of cognitive computing services based in the cloud that app devs can tap into to add capabilities to their solutions. All in all, an impressive number of compelling technology announcements.

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But in my opinion an opportunity was lost in not discussing and offering additional technology solutions for some major challenges facing developers, especially enterprise developers. Some of the biggest opportunities lost were in security and privacy, which were barely mentioned (other than in the Hello/Edge hookup). Much more could have been done (or at least hinted at) using Microsoft's growing list of cognitive services. Following is my brief list of what else should have been included.

App Security - The keynote talked about how the anniversary version of Windows 10 will allow more secure authentication via Hello and Edge to other web apps. But big security holes exist in most apps. What can Microsoft do to make sure app developers actually create secure apps via better analysis of

how they interact with the OS and tools for testing known weak points? Many app devs are not security experts and having Microsoft put some form of stake in the ground would be helpful while at the same time reassuring end users of a stronger commitment to securing computing interactions.

How will Windows better protect my security and privacy? - Why wasn't the need for multi-factor authentication better addressed? Why wasn't Cortana and cognitive able to assist with that task, say to find a way to insure it's me logging into my machine and/or apps? This is a critical need as identity theft is the major security threat to most users and enterprises. Microsoft could set a new standard if it extended the cognitive umbrella to better protecting the end user experience by allowing developers to access such tools.

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Malware monitoring - Why not a way for cognitive, knowledge based systems to actually monitoring what I'm doing and what I'm connecting to and make sure (as best as possible) I am not doing something not normal for me. This would indicate a bad actor running on my machine. It would be a great way to protect against some of the ransomware - allow Cortana to notify me before I take unusual actions. This is analogous to what banks do for our credit cards, and could help immensely with attacking malware. It's not easy, but Microsoft could have at least taken a step in that direction with its cognitive and learning based services.

Seamlessly moving between devices - I'm talking about going beyond Continuum (which wasn't even mentioned). Why not get cognitive to help understand when I move to another device and act as a concierge to make it easy for me to accomplish? With more devices coming online, this ease of transfer would be a huge benefit, even if it's only available on Windows powered platforms.

Better management for enterprise users - Build is a developer's conference, so perhaps this is not the best place to do so. But a statement about the future direction of device and app management (not in the Microsoft store, but for enterprises) would have been welcome here. The management market is changing and with more and more devices coming on line from diverse manufacturers, including IoT. It would have been a good place for Microsoft to start talking about this important topic

IoT more generally - Other than HoloLens, there was essentially no mention of IoT and how that will affect things. Yes, the universal app platform is supposed to take care of that (write once, run anywhere), but not all devices will be Windows powered. How is Microsoft helping to make the IoT revolution easier for developers and for companies (Xamarin helps but is not enough)? Many of the cloud, analytics and cognitive services will be critical to IoT success, but that wasn't really a topic here.

I understand that Build is a developer conference and there is just so much content you can put into a keynote. And many of the above are very challenging issues to solve. But it would have been quite useful (and well received) if Microsoft had addressed some of these major compelling issues. Hopefully that will happen in the near future. But I see this as a lost opportunity for Microsoft to have taken a major leadership position in the market.



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