

The State of Technology in Hampton Roads

Monday, August 28, 2017 - 6 minute read

Hampton Roads has long had a Technology Council Organization, and that group has gone through several evolutions over the last few years. In 2015, Technology Hampton Roads became the [Hampton Roads Innovation Collaborative \(HRIC\)](#). HRIC has a grand mission to create a strong environment for regional innovation and development, and support the local technical community by bringing existing groups together. They aim to do this as an organization that unites the technology community, filling the technical leadership void in the region that exists.

As part of the reformed organization, HRIC created an event to bring the region's top IT leaders/professionals, providers, and thought-provokers together for a day of information exchange and community networking. This inaugural event was titled "The State of Technology in Hampton Roads, held on August 22nd, 2017. When Marathon Consulting learned of the opportunity, we jumped in and volunteered as one of the sponsors for the event. The day started off early and thanks to [ConnX Event Solutions](#) for booth setup, we had plenty of time to meet and greet the attendees and other sponsors. The [new Hilton Main in Norfolk](#) was the perfect venue for the new conference. The venue has great views and made it easy to have in depth technical conversations while overlooking some of the jewels of the region in downtown Norfolk and the Elizabeth River.

Marianne Mele and Thomas Marsden ready at the Marathon booth



[Click image to view larger](#)

This event gave us the opportunity to reconnect with the familiar faces of clients, and the opportunity to meet new friends that we can work with in the future. There were also some very interesting technologies being showcased by vendors including a new solution for [biometric sign-in systems](#).

When coordinating a large conference with guest speakers, and attendees taking time out of their busy work schedules, keeping things running like clockwork is of paramount importance. With the help and dedication of the organizers and [MC Cheryl Tan](#), the day flew by with many informative talks and panel discussions. The following outlines the different sessions and topics that were covered throughout the day.

Speaker lineup for the State of Technology Event

The State of Information Technology in Hampton Roads

Keynote Speaker 4pm
 In 2014, Governor McAuliffe appointed **Brian Moran** to be the first Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security in Virginia history. Secretary Moran oversees a portfolio of 11 state agencies and the Homeland Security and Resilience Staff Group. He serves as the Governor's Homeland Security Advisor, charged with being the primary liaison to the Department of Homeland Security and the Virginia Fusion Center.

Special Lunchtime Speaker (Noon)
Joe McMahon, US Navy's Echelon II Command Information Officer (CIO) for the Naval Safety Center and as the Navy Deputy Logistics Functional Area Manager. He is a principal advisor on the alignment of IT investments to business priorities/assigned missions and cybersecurity strategies.

9am Andrew Cole, Director of Solutions Engineering for Peak 10 + ViaWest
 A Look into Hybrid IT; What is it? Who's Using It? How to Apply It.

11am Chris Lumpkin, Senior Solutions Architect, CAS Severn
 Protecting Your Organization from the People with Access to Your Most Critical Data – The IT Team!

2pm Josh Haley, Business Solutions Architect, NetApp + SLAIT Consulting
 Next Generation Data Management for the Hybrid Cloud.

Panel Discussions

Panel 1: CIO Panel – 10am
 Listen to the Chief Information Officers from the Private Sector and Academia discuss the challenges that Information Technology faces today.
 What's on their minds?
 What are their expectations?
 What expectations are on them?

Panel 2: Cyber Security – 1pm
 Cyber Security is one of the largest challenges faced by everyone in today's technology environment.
 What are the current state of the art challenges?
 What are the current state of the art solutions?
 What is needed by today's cyber workers?

Panel 3: Big Data – 3pm
 2016 was a landmark year for big data with more organizations storing, processing, and extracting value from data of all forms and sizes. In 2017, systems that support large volumes of both structured and unstructured data will continue to rise.

CIO Moderator: Deb Cassidy, CIO PRA Group
 • Peter Wallace, CIO Virginia Beach
 • Dale Smith, Dir of Technical Services, Sentara Healthcare
 • Rusty Waterfield, CIO ODU
 • Jeri Prophet, CEO Intellectech, Inc.

Cyber Moderator: Mary Ann (Malloy) Hoppa, PhD
 Visiting Professor, Department of Computer Science, Norfolk State University
 • Steven H. DeBerry, CIO City of Norfolk
 • Andy Kowalski, CISCO & head of Cyber Security for Jefferson Labs
 • Darek Dabbi, CTO Sera-Brynn
 • Ryan Cochran, Chief Information Security Officer, Towne Bank

Data Moderator: Kimberly Mahan, CEO at MAXX Potential
 • Paul Hurlocker, CEO & Co-Founder, Notch, Co.
 • Charles L. Cartledge, Interim Dir of Operations, Fulcrum IT
 • Jesse Wright, Manager of Data Science, Homes.com, a Division of Dominion Enterprises
 • Patric Lundberg, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Director, Bioinformatics Analytics Core, Microbiology and Molecular Cell Biology, Eastern Virginia Medical School.

[Click image to view larger](#)

The day kicked off strong with a presentation from Peak 10 discussing the evolution of the Hybrid cloud. The presentation covered data points from a study commissioned, showing findings that organizations were growing both their cloud infrastructure as well as their on-premise or collocated workloads at the same time, and are embracing the Hybrid stage for IT infrastructure. The reasons cited for choosing that path included; control, cost, and security. The conclusion highlighted that IT workload solutions are not one size to fit all.

The highlight of the conference for me, was the private sector CIO Panel. It consisted of five accomplished IT leaders sharing their journeys, accomplishments, and challenges with the attendees. Deb Cassidy, CIO of the PRA Group and moderator, did a great job of pulling out some of the initiatives each panelist had gone through. Rusty Waterfield, CIO of ODU, highlighted some of the challenges he

had in building a distributed IT infrastructure while getting all the ODU departments to buy in. Peter Wallace, CIO of VB, highlighted as technical leaders we cannot underestimate the influence you might have, no matter what position you are in. Jeri Prophet, CEO of IntellectTechs Inc., discussed the challenge of filling positions with qualified candidates in Hampton Roads and some areas the region needs to improve in. Finally, Dale Smith, Director of Technical Services at Sentara HealthCare, explained the unique challenges a dispersed health care organization has when it comes to IT and how they go about tackling them.

CIO Panel moderated by Deb Cassidy, CIO PRA Group



[Click image to view larger](#)

Cyber Security was a primary focus for many vendors and attendees at the conference. To satisfy that demand, a panel moderated by Professor Mary Ann Hoppa from Norfolk State University addressed many of the opportunities and challenges that come with Cyber Security. Ryan Cochran, the CISO of TowneBank, expressed one of the biggest challenges in Cyber Security is making sure they are investing enough and investing in the correct area. One comment that got the crowd going was made by Darek Dabbs, CTO of Sera-Brynn, where he stated that the elimination of BitCoin could easily take away 50% of the recent ransomware attacks. A point made by Andy Kowalski, CISCO at Jefferson Labs, was that the security compliance requirements caused more issues trying to conform to requirements that were not written with their systems in mind, and rather use that time to keep developing their own internal security wish list. Finally, Steven DeBerry, CIO of the City of Norfolk, made several points that it is the internal cultural challenge with all users to think of security threats in all their use of technology. The final speaker of the day was Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, Brian Moran. He updated the group on developments and ongoing threats to the commonwealth. He highlighted recent developments Virginia has made in the area of drones, taking a leadership role in that developing industry. Secretary Moran related the day-to-day technology challenges he faces to the group, and used the events of 8/17 in Charlottesville as an example of how they used multiple implementations of technology to assist with the events of that weekend. He highlighted the opportunities that Virginia businesses can take advantage of to help foster technology. Moran also made

a point to say that Virginia wants to be the destination for companies to invest in leading edge technologies. One of the most challenging areas of his office is defining guidelines for security for devices like body/license plate cameras used by local police. He thought that keeping those areas open without strict regulation, even some of those areas know are regulated by the city. As a final note, Secretary Moran taught us the important lesson of never allowing Windows Updates during a presentation - as you can see in the photo. However, he knew his material and was able to give a great presentation without the assistance of slides.

Keynote by Brian Moran, Security of Virginia Public Safety and Homeland Security, at State of Technology Event



[Click image to view larger](#)

To wrap it all up, the HRIC held a Tech Night happy hour to continue conversations that were started throughout the day. Marathon was happy to be a sponsor and plans to be involved in future State of Technology events. We highly recommend other companies in Hampton Roads to get involved with the [HRIC](#) by contacting their President, Dan Bell