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ON THE
EDGE

New technologies for managing efficiencies and data security are becoming even more intertwined. By Allie Russell and Kim Seufer

Now in its fourth year, TechEdge is a specialized program by Conexxus and NACS that spotlights technology education sessions at the NACS Show. It offers technology professionals in the c-store industry high-value learning, access to new solutions and a hands-on glimpse at future technologies.

This year's topics ranged from data security to how to improve overall operational efficiencies. Though the topics varied greatly in content, each session offered a similar piece of advice: Working together across various parts of the business is essential for adjusting to the growing problems and expectations of our industry.

Planning for the Future

The data risk landscape has been changing over the past few years, including continuous data capture and transmission, the growth of sensitive data and an undefined data risk perimeter (think mobile and the cloud). Receiving copious amounts of attention in the media as of late, data breaches have many asking how businesses can improve their data security. Conexxus Executive Director Gray Taylor, along with Chris Lietz, VP/principal at Cyber Risk Advisory at Coalfire, and George Rice, senior director of payments at MicroFocus-Voltage Security, answered this question in the TechEdge session, **"Protect Yourself from Data Breaches."**

Within the data risk landscape, trends in attack vectors show malware is the simplest and most effective avenue for stealing data. The panel discussed two modern forms of security tactics:

- **Data centric:** protecting each data element of data systems and leaving the data accessible on an individual level while not all the data is unprotected; and
- **Format preservation:** preserving the attributes of original values and protecting data as it goes from each system.

The panel offered a solution to help firms recognize the importance of data security. Lietz stated that "cyber risk is business risk," and urged attendees to focus on what is most important to the enterprise and to utilize cyber security frameworks.

Conexxus Director of Standards Linda Toth, Citgo Petroleum Point of Sale Manager Kara Gunderson and CHS (Cenex) Payment Solutions Director Mike Lindberg tackled the question of how merchants can meet the growing expectation for data security. In the session, **"What's Happened? What's New? What's Coming? Leveraging Data Security Technology,"** the panel discussed the growing security concerns around upgrading to EMV and new payment technologies, and they offered advice on how retailers can be proactive.

Don't be the last man standing when it comes to keeping data environments secure, they advised, and offered solutions such as improving lighting on the forecourt, investing in secure card readers and utilizing the NACS WeCare program (for more information visit www.convenience.org/wecare). The final solution the panel offered was to utilize the work of standards bodies such as Conexxus, ISO and NIST, as well as to talk to vendors, acquirers and oil brands in order to best understand software and security needs and how those needs can be met.

Technology Ahead

This year, the TechEdge center at the NACS Show expo displayed three future technologies in action:

- **GoSkip** demonstrated a solution that allows customers to scan products on their phone and skip the checkout line.
- **Stuzo** showed their innovations on connected commerce to increase the frequency of customer visits and average value of transaction for each visit at the pump and in the c-store.
- **Wovyn** exhibited its IoT monitoring in store coolers.

Technology influences almost everything we interact with, and cars are no exception. **Koupon Media,** a mobile offers platform, is working with General Motors to develop an app integrated into the car that will send an alert via dashboard screen when fuel levels are low. This alert will include locations of nearby places to fuel, and prompts for coupons that can be used at convenience stores.

And while cars are getting smarter, so are fuel dispensers. **Dover Fueling Solutions** is working on a dispenser unit that has a large digital display, no PIN pad and is equipped with a camera to recognize when a customer is ready to fuel, signaled by a thumbs up. The dispenser recognizes the customer's face to access fueling, shopping and financial preferences for hands-free payment.

Gilbarco Veeder-Root is also working on technology to improve the fueling experience. Their pumps are equipped with large digital displays offering a variety of features, such as GSTV for directing offers during fueling, impulse purchasing at the pump, and ordering at the pump. All of which will be equipped to handle EMV payment.

Best Practices

Ryan Riggs, director of F&B operations for Sheetz, talked about how retailers can use technology to drive customers to their food business.

David Ezell, principal software architect at Verifone; Brad McGuinness, SVP, global petroleum systems at Verifone; Brent Peters, director of IT at Circle K; and Pat Raycroft, founding partner of W. Capra Consulting Group, tackled yet another common question in their session: **"Software Testing...Is That Really My Responsibility?"**

McGuinness covered vendor quality strategy, focusing on the need for continuous testing to ensure quality, promoting automation and standards methods, and fostering transparency. Peters added a retailer's perspective, addressing the importance of quality assurance and its objective: convenience. To round out the discussion, Raycroft, as an industry expert, urged the importance of a detailed plan of how to test, involving vendors and stakeholders in the discussion. Ultimately, the panel noted that software testing is a group effort for both vendors and retailers and that they must work together to meet a business's needs.

In **"Tech Tips to Build, Manage and Measure Your Foodservice Business,"** Ed Collupy, executive consultant for W. Capra, and Ryan Riggs, director of F&B operations for Sheetz, explored the growing foodservice industry of convenience stores. Technology in foodservice can decrease customer wait time, provide a higher degree of customization and more. In the convenience store industry, technology has the capacity to become an important tool in keeping up with the growing trend of foodservice. Perhaps more important is to test programs to ensure they are efficient, consistent, intuitive and scalable. Riggs stressed the importance of surveying consumers to find what they do and do not like when trying to improve foodservice within a store, adding that "what is nice to have today will be tomorrow's expectation."

Making It Work

Vladik Rikhter, CEO of Zenput, shared how companies are rapidly implementing mobile technologies and applications to drive efficiencies.

A set of expert panels covered the primary motivation of workforce management—to reduce as many errors as possible using seamless processing and reducing human interaction through automation via mobile apps for employees and customer ordering. Presenters included Eric Barnes, senior manager of information technology engineering at Wawa; Vladik Rikhter, CEO at Zenput; Austin Skaggs, VP consulting services for PDI; Barrett Sims, VP and controller for Pak-A-Sak; and Hubert Williams, connect VP for Maverik. In **"Workforce Management: Are You One Click Away from Operational Efficiencies?"** and **"It's Time to Mobilize Your Workforce and Use Technology to Increase Operations Efficiency,"** Williams noted that if we know employees and customers are going to be using their mobile devices, we should leverage that information to eliminate wait times for the customer, and resolve scheduling conflicts and reduce overtime for employees. Referring TechEdge and the NACS Show, Skaggs finished his session with some words of wisdom: "Collaboration and discussion will make [the efficiency] gap smaller because we are working together."

Every panel at TechEdge recommended some form of collaboration to solve industry problems. Whether it's working across parts of your business to mitigate cyber security, working with standards bodies, acquirers and oil brands to preserve data security, working among vendors and retailers to test software, or working between retailers, employees and customers to improve store operation, collaboration is key. There is work to be done! NACS

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