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NEWSLETTER

Our Conference on Privacy, Security, and Public Policy for the Internet of Things

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The thing about the "Internet of Things" is that the phenomenon presents as many definitions, use cases, and business models as there are regulators and legislators trying to imagine what can go wrong with it. A more nuanced view sees IoT innovation and regulation in a yin and yang relationship—contrary forces that are actually complementary, interconnected, and interdependent. This seemed to be the overarching conclusion from a May 11 IoT policy roundtable hosted by McBee Strategic Consulting and Wiley Rein LLP.

Our half-day conference featured keynote perspectives from Congresswoman Suzan DelBene (D-WA), co-chair of the Congressional IoT Caucus, and ForeScout Technologies CEO Mike DeCesare, as well as industry and government panelists who painted broad-stroke visions of what IoT looks like now and in the future and how the government can plan, engage, and regulate. In a world that is increasingly relying on the Internet to work uninterrupted and uncorrupted, the roundtable focused on the security, safety, and privacy challenges facing the growth of IoT and how government and industry sectors will cooperate to find the optimal balance between risk and innovation.

Managing Interdependence

Moderated by McBee Strategic Executive Vice President Greg Garcia and Wiley Rein partner Megan Brown, the discussions made clear that there are many cross-sector dynamics at play—involving connected vehicles, spectrum policy, infrastructure investment, workforce development, smart cities, industrial and economic efficiencies, safety and security standards, and privacy sensitivities

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about the use of connected homes or medical devices. Understanding and managing the interdependencies among these business models and policy challenges require a methodical process of reconciling the freedom of market forces and the strictures of government intervention. In short, "smart policy for smart devices requires smart process."

This concept is embodied in a bill (S. 2607) recently reported out by the Senate Commerce Committee, called the DIGIT Act (Developing Innovation and Growing the Internet of Things Act). The DIGIT Act establishes an interagency working group, to involve industry, that will assess and report on the government's use of IoT and the various privacy, security, safety, operational, and economic issues related to the deployment of IoT technology and services. It rightly acknowledges that we don't yet know what we don't know.

The McBee Strategic and Wiley Rein teams are driving the conversation with our clients and others in the IoT ecosystem on what such a smart process means. One compelling approach would offer a 360-degree view of the business and policy dynamics of IoT involving a cross-sector alliance of industry leaders. The objectives of this kind of alliance would be to build awareness about the opportunities, benefits, and risks of IoT and to establish the policy principles that would guide assessment of the appropriate balance between risk management and innovation. Our expansive team of legal, policy, political, and communications executives will bring that very 360-degree view and influence to the table as the politics of sector-specific and cross-sector IoT policy play out.

Roundtable Participants

In addition to our keynoters, helping us draw the contours of the IoT dialogue during our May roundtable were numerous industry and government panelists to whom we owe thanks for their thought leadership:

- David Logsdon, CompTIA
- John "Red" Millander, Honeywell International
- Andy York, General Motors
- David Young, Verizon Public Policy
- David Quinalty, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
- Jessica Rich, Federal Trade Commission
- Suzanne Schwartz, Food and Drug Administration
- Gregory Touhill, Department of Homeland Security, and
- Jeffrey Weiss, Department of Commerce

These experts discussed the policy challenges facing the IoT and how government and policy have a difficult time keeping up with rapid advances in the technology. Our current connectivity and infrastructure may not be enough to keep up with the product base and how they engage with each other. Our government sector panel similarly discussed their responsibility for convening and, as necessary, regulating IoT stakeholders to ensure consumer safety, privacy, and security.