



Intro: Podcasting monthly from the shores of the Delaware River in Trenton, New Jersey, TechNJ brings you discussions and interviews on a variety of current technology issues, trends & topics with industry leaders and up-and-coming influencers. We will find where "Technology Meets Public Service in New Jersey".

John: Hello, I am John Silvestri, and welcome to a special episode of TechNJ. We are on location at the annual New Jersey Digital Government Summit right here in Trenton. This two-day event is designed to spread best practices and spur innovation in the public sector. Some of the topics being discussed this year include reinventing the customer experience, the internet of things, cloud ecosystems, big data, security versus mobility, virtual reality, and many more. Earlier, I was lucky enough to talk to a group of participants. I asked them what they were hoping to take out of this year's summit. Here is what they had to say.

Person 1: We are here to learn more about cloud. That's the buzz lately everywhere, so we just want to go into the cloud session that they have right now.

Person 2: I look forward to every aspect of it, of mingling with the people and learning more about the new technology that's out there, as well as the keynote speakers, which are truly amazing. They come in here with so much creativity and energy, and it is just wonderful to be an audience participant.

Person 3: I am very busy at work, and I don't have a lot of time to explore technology or get out to events. It's very convenient for me here, coming across the street from the Department of Human Services, to come to this event every year. For me, it's a way for me to recharge technically, you know, get some ideas. The other thing I like about it, for me personally, is it allows me to interact a little bit longer and deeper with the vendors.

Person 4: You know, it was a great opportunity to come out and see some of the speakers and hear them talking about just what's going on in technology today. Bronkar Lee, this morning, the keynote speaker, he was great. "Hacking the Learning Curb," it was very interesting, and some of the ways he was showing you to step outside of your box as a person in life and in life and how we are with our job here at OIT with information and technology. Because some of us, you know, are nervous to press the button still and sometimes you are going to fail. I mean, he says it's okay that you fail; that's where you learn from.

Person 5: So I work for Department of Children and Families. We have a lot of social workers, sort of deployed workforce, going out in the field, and we are looking for – we have some mobile solutions, and I am I just looking for that next phase. There's a variety of vendors here that, you know, have solutions. So one of the main problems I have is that I have to have a cellular connection. These are staff members who are out in the field, they need to be able to connect. You know, do an investigation for child abuse or neglect, they need to be able to connect back to our network and see, you know – document their work or do look ups, things like that which are on a closed network. And so seeing what options they have and the product that's coming out in a couple days from Lenovo or from Dell. It's interesting to see what's coming out and then sort of imagining how I am going to work that into you know or advise people on how we might work that that into our needs.

Person 6: Well I met some people from local government, and I actually had lunch with them. I also met vendors from Oracle, Aviah and IBM while I was her too. So I got to talk to each of them about their products.

Person 7: Ah, I enjoyed the keynote, especially the point the speaker made about looking at changes as opportunities, looking at the ability to exercise either latent skills or build new skills. I thought that was a good point to make and one that I try to implement.

Person 8: This is my first time so I am kind of exploring. I really liked the morning session that we had about hacking. Cause the speaker, he was very good very informative. I think I learned few things and looking forward to learn more.

Person 9: I think it is a great event. I hope that the state keep posting this, I think it is a wonderful opportunity for state government employees as well as vendors to get out and network. But also I think it is a great educational form as well.

John: We also had the chance to sit down with the person who put this whole event together, Jack Mortimer of Government Technology magazine. Jack, it's an honor to have you on the podcast.

Jack: It's great to be here.

John: So you're the one who organized all this. This is the NJ digital summit, this is your project?

Jack: True, as I am one of a team. I am the conference director, we have a great team of four of us are here actually, working on the conference right now. We also have a great advisory board composed of mainly CIO's in state agencies. Lot of OIT personnel and local government CIO's as well. And they advise us on what content is most needed and wanted and then we craft a program around that.

John: How does a particular speaker or program make the cut to get into the NJ digital Summit?

Jack: We have two planning meetings we hold here in Trenton. I actually, I don't live in NJ, I live in Florida but I fly up here for the meetings and I grew up in the tristate area so I am not unfamiliar. And we hold two planning meetings with the advisory board and as we are deciding what topics to choose based on what is of most interest to the CIO's and what they feel their staff is most interested in as well. And we come up with the topics, the focus of those topics, the direction we want it to go and then we brainstorm about possible speakers. Now we take advantage of both private sector and public sector speakers because we found that audiences most prefer to attend a session that has both viewpoints. You know Private sector view point and a parishioner view point as well. So usually we're able to find someone from government or state local government NJ who can contribute to that topic and we can often select from our industry sponsors who have expertise in that same topic. And that's like an ideal kind of composition of a, of a session. Either a panel or a speaker or to have some of both.

John: Is there anything particular that you've looked forward to today? Either meeting people, networking, a particular speaker, a particular topic?

Jack: We kicked off the summit with a great dynamic speaker named Bronkar Lee, whose topic was called "Hacking the Learning Curve," and his mission is to kind of reignite passions for learning. How to help turn people into "serial learners," he called it. And, and how to learn quickly and effectively and efficiently. Yeah, a fantastic concept of he doesn't look at things in terms of years, or months or hours. That it's all in minutes and he logs his minutes and everything. It was a fascinating approach and he had a book that he's written about it too. And that was our kick off so we all really look forward to that. And that was great. He plays musical instruments, shows all these different ways you can learn something quickly. And that was, that was the kick off of the conference. Actually that was following Dave Weinstein's opening remarks. He gave the State of the State address which was excellent by the way. And we had the keynote speaker and then we had networking break and then we had several educational sessions. And then after lunch we had a panel on open data with some open data thought leaders that was really, really good. And that's where we stand right now, we just finished a networking break now there are more educational sessions happening. Tomorrow morning we have a keynote speaker to talk about communicating in a crisis and the subtitle of that session is "30 years of work destroyed in 30 seconds".

John: Oh yeah, the dread of every IT professional just to have all their data wiped out or ransomware or otherwise destroyed.

Jack: And how to prepare for that cause if you handle it wrong you can become a newspaper scandal or it can become bad for morale or something but if you are prepared, this is how we handle it, this is how we deal with it, you handle it quickly. Very often when you have a proper crisis plan, it's an non event when these things happen. So its remarkable how it can just die out and not be a problem but you can handle it entirely wrong which most people do. So we are looking forward to that tomorrow. That's the keynote.

John: The NJ Digital summit is organized in part with government technology magazine. What else does government technology magazine do, provide? What kind of articles can I expect to see in there?

Jack: Well GovTech, we call it for short, is totally geared for state and local government IT. Not federal, although federal people do read it too. What we're trying to do is tell a story of what's happening out there in state and local government IT wise. Shared successes, problems, solutions and just different news worthy items. And then we have our website govtech.com, is very, very popular.

John: Is GovTech a monthly, a bi-monthly, bi-weekly?

Jack: Monthly magazine but our website is updated daily, you know multiple times a day. More and more we are finding people who are looking at it digitally or online rather than the paper magazine but we still send out an awful lot of paper magazines.

John: What should people attending the NJ digital summit, what do you want them to take away from the summit?

Jack: There's two things that we really try to do with the summit. To get people away from their desks, offices, cubicle, whatever. Take a breath and really step back and and look at what they're doing, what's coming, how they can prepare for it. That that, the educational part of that, about what's ahead is one of the two big things we are trying to accomplish. The second one is for people to get to know people that they don't talk to everyday. And be able to share their challenges with others or facing something similar. Share ideas, solutions. And that's extremely effective. One county CIO told me once, that a conference like this is worth 5 years of mistakes. And it's really true. Now if you come here and just hang out with a person who has a desk next to you all the time, that's not going to happen. But if you make a little effort to, to talk to others and talk to vendors too, who, who are here, then you can almost surely recoup the day and a half at the conference quite easily by just time savers and you know there is no reason to keep reinventing the wheel.

John: Well Jack I know that I have had an excellent time here at the NJ digital summit. I thank you for helping organizing it. I will definitely check out Govtech.com

Jack: And I would just like to give a shout out to OIT for all the, you know, work and support they do. They've been fantastic and been great partners in the summit ever year, especially this year.

John: Thank you very much to Jack Mortimer of Government Technology magazine for sitting down with us and for all of our guests on this episode of TechNJ. Unfortunately that's all the time we have today. Tune in next time to hear from some of the presenters at the 2017 New Jersey Digital Summit. We will be discussing a plethora of tech issues and trends. So be sure to check it out. If you have any comments or suggestions for us here at TechNJ, shoot us a email at [podcast@tech.nj.gov](mailto:podcast@tech.nj.gov). Thank you for listening to this special episode of TechNJ. We will catch you next time.

