The 2011 Gartner Catalyst Conference was held July 26 – 29, at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront in San Diego, CA. This trip report summarizes the event and its highlights, topics and take-aways, including:

Conference Overview........................................................................................................ page 1
Top-Rated Sessions and Key Recommendations ............................................................ page 2
Conference Highlights.....................................................................................................page 3
Keynote Addresses............................................................................................................page 5
Snapshot of Attendees .....................................................................................................page 6
Attendee Aha Moments ....................................................................................................page 6
Sponsors ..........................................................................................................................page 8

Conference Overview

At the 2011 Gartner Catalyst Conference that took place July 26 – 29, in San Diego, CA, more than 800 attendees convened to explore the strategic and tactical challenges that IT practitioners have identified as crucial to their success. This year’s event was the largest Catalyst Conference to date, covering eight highly focused tracks and 150+ sessions that provide in-depth technical research, knowledge and decision support tools for every IT role and discipline. Role-based tracks included:

• Identity and Privacy
• Content and Collaboration
• Cloud
• Data Management
• Security and Risk Management
• Wireless and Mobility
• Software Delivery
• Data Center

During three-and-a-half intensive days of interactive analyst presentations, keynotes, extensive real-world end-user case studies, peer networking and roundtable discussions, attendees gained valuable practical knowledge that is critical for making decisions on where to spend IT budgets, what priorities to set and how to ensure alignment with the business.

This year, nearly 50 end users presented personal, leading-edge case studies and fielded questions from attendees. These presentations were an important part of the conference experience, giving attendees a valuable inside look at their challenges, issues and lessons learned.
Top-Rated Sessions and Key Recommendations

Here are key recommendations from this year’s most popular Gartner-analyst sessions — especially useful for your 2012 planning and strategy considerations:

F15. Text Analytics: Nothing Remains Unstructured
Jamie Popkin, Vice President Distinguished Analyst

Recommendations
• Use an application framework such as the Gartner Text Analytics Application Framework to classify and organize the text analytics application portfolio by giving context for:
  – Evaluating which types of extraction capability are needed
  – Considering appropriate classification or categorization schemes
  – Determining which types of advanced semantic analysis to create

B19. Close the Gap With Cloud Storage Gateways
Gene Ruth, Research Director

Recommendations
• Use caution: Evaluate your tolerance for nascent products
• Consider gateways for cloud storage environments and multisite collaboration
• Classify workloads appropriate for gateways to determine best fit
• Consider gateway products that compare well against conventional disk array feature sets

B6. Building Internal Clouds: Tales From the Trenches
Chris Wolf, Research Vice President

Recommendations
• Break up the data center transformation into small, manageable projects
• Serious trade-offs exist when restricting the number and versions of supported guest OSs and apps
• Ignoring strategic aspects of execution (e.g., organizational governance) may be tempting, but doing so could set an internal cloud transformation back years
• If Amazon is the cost benchmark, re-assess where “best-of-breed” is truly needed versus where included hypervisor platform features are “good enough”

D4. Myth Busting: Facts and Fiction About Today’s Agile Development
Sean Kenefick, Research Director

Recommendations
• Determine if your organization is ready for agile
• Take an agile approach to agile adoption
• Colocate feature teams whenever possible
• Ensure collaborative abilities of distributed teams

“Very timely topics. Actionable information, good level of detail. Excellent networking opportunities.”

Dennis Hoover
Enterprise Architecture Consultant, Constellation Energy

“Very informative. Ability to discuss topics one on one is a major plus.”

Meg Camden
Director, IT System Architecture & Standards, Estes Express Lines

Very timely topics. Actionable information, good level of detail. Excellent networking opportunities.”

Dennis Hoover
Enterprise Architecture Consultant, Constellation Energy

“Very informative. Ability to discuss topics one on one is a major plus.”

Meg Camden
Director, IT System Architecture & Standards, Estes Express Lines
Train the staff (including the business side)
Keep the code line “demo-able”

**E6. SharePoint 2010’s Metadata Service — and Why You Should Use It**
Darin Stewart, Research Director

Recommendations
- Make sure the Managed Metadata Service is turned on
- Look at your logs
- Define a minimal, broadly applicable metadata framework
- Start with a simple, broadly applicable vocabulary
  - The WAND General Business Taxonomy is a good place to start
- Pick a pilot and start tagging

**Conference Highlights**

150+ Gartner Track Sessions — some selected topics:
- Cloud Security and Resiliency
- Identity: New Architectures for a New Market
- Hybrid Clouds: Connecting the Internal to the External
- Building an Internal Cloud (virtualization/data center focus)
- The Anywhere Enterprise (mobility focus)
- Managing Risk That Comes With New Work Models and Endpoint Strategies
- Applying Security Intelligence
- Moving Apps and Data to the Cloud: Choosing Between Internal or External Clouds

**Two Keynotes**
- Welcome Address and Opening Keynote: Architecting the Future: Innovation, IT and the Technologist
- Closing Keynote: Architecting the Future: Reactions and Actions

**Plus:**
- 50 End-user case studies
- 18 Analyst-user roundtables
- 4 Tutorials
- 11 Workshops
- 18 Sponsor hospitality suites
- Net IT Out sessions
Conference Highlights (continued)

Continuing Professional Education Credits
Catalyst Conference attendees had an opportunity to earn up to 26 CPE credits from ISACA and ISC2.

Enhanced Networking Opportunities
Over 800 attendees, Gartner analysts and invited guests were on hand to connect with colleagues and their peers throughout the conference. On-site networking activities included:

- Tuesday evening welcome reception
- Networking breakfasts broken out by topic and industry; breakfasts with Gartner analysts
- Networking luncheons for Public Sector, Higher Education and Canadian/International attendees
- Private analyst one-on-one meetings
- End-user case study roundtables and hands-on workshops
- Social Media: LinkedIn and Twitter #CAT11

Over 3,300 tweets on-site with a high level of engaged attendee interaction:

- Fascinating 1:1 with an ent. integration architect about the challenges of cloud integration with the data center. Great discussion! #CAT11
- Gartner Catalyst 2011 was fantastic. Good to listen to @cswolf @a_perilli @dreeves1 @kylehilgendorf and more! #CAT11
- Great non-IT presentation from @mikerollings. This is what makes Catalyst high value and standout IMHO. #CAT11
- #CAT11 Glad to see most of the technologies we adopted in the last 2 years are the key topics at Gartner Catalyst.

“High-quality event. I strongly recommend. The analysts’ recommendations were very valuable.”

Carlos Dutra
IT Manager, Bradesco
Keynote Addresses

K1a. Opening Welcome Address
Gary G. Hein, Group Vice President, Gartner Research

Gary Hein opened the 17th annual Catalyst Conference in North America with an insider’s view into the week’s activities to help attending IT practitioners get the most value out of this year’s event.

K1b. Opening Keynote: Architecting the Future: Innovation, IT and the Technologist
Chris Howard, Managing Vice President and Conference Chair, Gartner Research

In the opening keynote, conference chair Chris Howard discussed the opportunities that IT professionals are faced with in a post-recession landscape. IT and business innovation work hand-in-hand to ensure an organization’s future, and that innovation is usually the result of collaborative insight rather than lone eureka moments. We learned that moving from insight to action is the key to architecting the future.

K2. Closing Keynote: Architecting the Future: Reactions and Actions
Chris Howard

In this closing keynote, Howard used the insights gathered from the preceding days of sessions, workshops, roundtables and networking to provide a collective call to action that outlined opportunities, challenges and concrete next steps for the coming months. Participants were asked to submit questions and comments using social media to help shape the content of this closing session.
Attendee Aha Moments

Nearly 60 attendees submitted their Aha moments on-site and here’s what a select few had to say:

**Workshop: A Gearhead’s Guide to Influence, Persuasion and Presentations**

**Aha Moment:** Most decisions are made before the formal meeting with IT begins. Influence is brokered outside of formal decision processes. Decisions must be influenced early on.

— Senior Systems Analyst, British Columbia Institute of Technology

**Session: Escaping the IT Walled Garden**

**Aha Moment:** Media tablets are not a fad, they are not going to go away. They are here to stay. IT needs to break down the traditional IT walls and embrace this technology. IT needs to be an early adopter.

— Senior Systems Analyst, British Columbia Institute of Technology

**Workshop: Cloud Storage**

**Aha Moment:** A great question was raised: If cloud company personnel are not responsible for my data integrity and storage, then who is? Answer: Me, my organization.

— Senior IT Analyst, Omers

**Aha Moment:** As we move toward a cloud architecture, we need, more than ever, a storage architect in addition to the storage admins we currently have.

— IT Innovation Manager, Air Products

**Session: Key Issues in Wireless and Mobility**

**Aha Moment:** The feasibility (and possibility) of a “Bring your own device” mobile policy seems to be the move of the future. Now I need to create a plan to adopt and stay ahead of the curve.

— Global IT Manager, Parcell Systems
Attendee Aha Moments (continued)

Session: Shift Happens: Postmodern Agility

Aha Moment: Become a broker, not a builder, and put human interaction back into business decisions

— Anonymous

Workshop: Open Identity Interop Enterprise Use Case Definition BOF

Aha Moment: “Assurance” of the validity of an assertion is not the same as “confidence” that the user is who they assert to be.

— Senior Online Channel Management, Sub Financial Group

Track: Data Center: New and Future Technologies

Aha Moment: During track H on technology, the concept of taking SAN out of the picture for UDI and simply storing the UDI image on fast disk, locally on the UM locations, was an Aha moment for me.

— Systems Manager, Alliance Bank NA

“Compared to other conferences, this one is thought-provoking and re-energizing.”

Christopher Butwell
Senior Consultant,
Northern Trust

“Fantastic content in general; Real-world application provides the greatest value.”

Adrian Gonzalez
IT Manager, San Diego County
“Very practical event, especially on the what and how. I always enjoy Gartner events best.”

Marc Belsher
Senior Director, Enterprise Services, McKesson

“This conference is amazing. The content is outstanding and will help me greatly when I return to the office.”

Tammy Dixon
Director of CRM, Mecklenburg County