

Smart up your City

InterComms speaks with Norbert Hohegger, Business Architect, Infonova



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Norbert Hohegger is a business architect at Infonova with over 15 years of experience in business support solutions and more recently in digital ecosystem management. Norbert has been with Infonova since 2005 as a solutions architect and has extensive understanding of cross industry verticals, including Telco, Automotive, Utilities, and Media. Building on this, he now heads up Digital Business Innovation at Infonova, creating new business architecture designs and innovations for digital business trends, from a business level all the way down to technical. His current focus is on smart cities and how to create smarter services for a smarter life.

Q: Cities are facing new challenges with regard to population growth, infrastructure, depletion of resources and overall environmental impacts. Smart cities are becoming an important factor in shaping the future of people's lives and the business environment within cities. I understand that this is a topic that Infonova has been investigating – tell me about your findings.

A: For the first time in the history of humankind, the larger proportion of the population is living in urban areas and the

UN predicts that up to 70 percent of people will reside in cities by 2070. This trend poses major challenges for cities but at the same time offers new possibilities for creating future services that ensure a high quality, sustainable ecofriendly life for every urban dweller.

Governments and municipalities find it hard encouraging their citizens to live in a future-oriented, ecologically smart way, without posing strict and infringing regulations on them. The importance of a collective green strategy is often hard to grasp, and most of the time, "Do it for your children" does not suffice for people to drastically change their views.

The building and planning of a livable and sustainable city of the future, one that addresses and satisfies all the needs of its many inhabitants, is a crucial undertaking to ensure social equality, economic growth and a conscious protection of the environment.

The three main actors of a smart city - citizens, businesses, and municipality - are interconnected and cannot function properly without the others. A participatory government needs engagement from dedicated citizens who want to get involved and participate in the decision making process. An enterprise looking for a new location is drawn by the promise of a good business environment, a functioning infrastructure, and access to highly qualified, potential employees. And last but not least, the citizens need a functioning government as well as innovative enterprises to provide the means to satisfy all of their needs. When all these parts come together, a smart city can actually shape the future for its community and influence many people in their everyday lives for the better.

While energy suppliers and cities are and have been contributing toward a greener and smarter future, mandatory processes along with bureaucratic obstacles often limit or slow progress. Infonova believes that information and communication technologies have an important bearing on the future of cities and the individuals living within them. Smart cities aim to integrate many different areas of human interaction with their environment into one system. Creating a new consumer trend in this sector and making it easier to contribute to a greener now by relying on the individuals themselves rather than governments will drive this future.



Q: Innovation has always played an important role for Infonova, so following this investigation into the impacts of urbanisation you have now introduced the concept of “Green Paragon” – what is this about?

A: Green Paragon is an answer to creating smarter cities and smarter futures. It is a gamification-based reward system that motivates consumers to choose green energy over non-renewable energy, opt to cycle or take public transport rather than drive and take the decision to install smart devices into their home to monitor consumption.

This gamification approach towards smart city citizens uses video game-based experiences to incentivize residents to act in a more ecologically sustainable way. This approach is in direct contrast to a regulatory approach as it encourages people to act and reduce their ecological footprint voluntarily through the promise of rewards.

Green Paragon is a system that is designed to help people who are living in urban areas reduce their ecological footprint and waste, and follow a more sustainable lifestyle in general. Citizens lower their energy consumption, switch from using a car to public transport or bike riding, and minimize their waste and water output. For each eco-action, citizens earn bonus points, and these green paragon points are subsequently redeemable as discounts on the cities' goods and services.

The three main actors of a smart city – citizens, businesses and municipality – all benefit. The municipality has an easy and non-intrusive way of shaping its citizens' behaviour and is in a better position to reach climate targets. The citizens act in a more ecologically responsible way and gain bonus points as rewards that can be redeemed for goods and services. Local businesses benefit from increased consumption and new customers.

Green Paragon builds a network that, after an initial take-up phase, finances itself. As more and more people use the Green Paragon service, change their behaviour, and redeem points, a visible increase in consumption boosts the city's economy. Bonus point redemption might function in the form of free coffee in the city centre, reduced prices for cinema or theatre tickets, shopping vouchers, or free public transport fares - the possibilities are endless. Once the system is established, the platform will be able to reach out to new customers and generate additional revenue for the service provider. The network is essential here, because every service provider potentially benefits from customers other providers bring to the platform.

Since the municipality is the main beneficiary of the long-term benefits, it is only fair that they partially compensate the service providers in accepting the bonus point system. For the city, Green Paragon is a sustainability

project, which will shape its future. Cities allocate resources to motivate their citizens to be eco-conscious and boost the economy by stimulating consumption. Unlike other sustainability-oriented projects, there are no sunk costs for the municipality – it gets what it pays for. The amount of reductions created by citizens' scales up with the amount of money that needs to be invested in the system.

Q: The introduction of new smart ecosystems are pivotal in the process of creating smart cities, as well as the future of businesses and the individuals living within these cities. How does Infonova R6 as a digital ecosystem management platform support this?

A: Green Paragon alongside Infonova R6 is able to serve as an overarching platform for a city to transition into a smarter, more sustainable future. The digital ecosystem management platform allows for the smooth and easy operation of Green Paragon, covering the redemption of bonus points by citizens, and the billing of said bonus points, as well as the account management of all users on the platform.

Infonova sees enormous potential in the concept behind Green Paragon which reflects Infonova's underlying thoughts on the way toward a smarter, brighter and more profitable future. Infonova believes this can only be achieved through innovation and businesses working together in mutually beneficial relationships, with citizens as key instigators and important parts of the overall process. And the Infonova R6 platform provides the necessary tool for this. The way ahead projects many challenges and opportunities, but together we can ensure that our world remains liveable and sustainable, and rewards those who make the effort to do so – from the consumers to the businesses.

Infonova R6, with its multi-tenant capabilities, enables various parties to collaborate and interact with each other in a digital ecosystem. The platform functions to manage and monetize all aspects of the collaboration, and is unique in its ability to be applied to all kinds of products and services, from traditional to complex digital services, across various industries including telco, media, banking, healthcare, utilities and so on.

This digital eco management platform enables the gamification aspects for providers of digital service offerings, allows operators to manage the diversity of services and rewards the customers for eco-friendly behaviour.

Green Paragon cloud services based on Infonova R6 offered in several cities all over the world opens up new possibilities for partnerships towards a smarter, more sustainable future.

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