Cool Vendors in Digital Workplace Programs and Applications

Published 20 November 2020 - ID G00734660 - 9 min read

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Initiatives: Digital Workplace Program

With remote work being the new normal, organizations need to promote a healthy remote work culture and enable workers with applications and tools for enhanced collaboration and improved effectiveness. Application leaders can leverage these three Cool Vendors for smooth transition to remote work.

Overview

Key Findings

- Organizations with remote work programs strive for “one-stop solutions” to improve collaboration agility and to reduce the need for employees to switch between different content and collaboration tools.

- Remote working has accelerated the need to enhance employee experiences and the cohesiveness of their work interactions, such as by using noise cancellation, teleconferencing and reliable home technology.

- Due to a surge in remote working, organizations are increasingly concerned about privacy regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), along with enhancing the security of sensitive information to mitigate potential data breaches.

Recommendations

Application leaders responsible for the digital workplace who are seeking to improve employee remote working experiences should:

- Improve collaboration and remote workers’ performance through a centralized collaboration platform that enables employees to communicate faster and smarter.

- Invest in AI-based noise-canceling software to improve the quality of internal meetings and customer meetings, which can potentially reduce total cost of ownership (expensive headphones with built-in active noise cancellation [ANC] no longer required) for the organizations with large remote workforces.
Secure the sensitive personal information of your employees and customers through AI-based software, saving organization from data breaches.

Strategic Planning Assumption
By 2030, 48% of employees worldwide will work remotely, compared to 30% pre-COVID-19.

Analysis
This research does not constitute an exhaustive list of vendors in any given technology area, but rather is designed to highlight interesting, new and innovative vendors, products and services. Gartner disclaims all warranties, express or implied, with respect to this research, including any warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose.

What You Need to Know
COVID-19 has forced organizations around the globe to work remotely so they can continue operating while also protecting employee health. As the pandemic progresses, many employees will be asked to continue working remotely for longer than anticipated. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an exponential increase in remote work programs all over the globe, causing corporate offices to turn into ghost offices. A Gartner survey revealed that 74% of companies intend to shift some employees to remote work permanently post-COVID-19. In fact, nearly a quarter of the CFOs in the survey have said that they will move at least 20% of their on-site employees to permanent remote positions. ¹
This fast-paced evolution toward remote work on an unprecedented scale caught many employees off guard. The need for organizations to be digitally resilient for a seamless shift toward remote work is now more important than ever before. Digital workplace leaders must make sure that during this transition toward remote work, employees are equipped with appropriate applications and software to improve their experience, engagement and performance levels.

Each of the three Cool Vendors featured below help organizations address different challenges facing application leaders, who are responsible for creating effective remote-work programs and allowing employees to do their work efficiently irrespective of their location. Gartner advises clients to explore the technologies offered by these and other vendors to help employees continue to work remotely.

DocuVision.ai

Berkley, California, U.S. (www.docuvision.ai)

Analysis by Lane Severson

Why Cool: DocuVision.ai applies content intelligence capabilities to identify and redact sensitive information such as personally identifiable information (PII) and personal health information.
Organizations who are attempting to comply with growing privacy regulations such as GDPR and the CCPA have large volumes of data in email, network file systems and cloud storage. DocuVision.ai differentiates from general file analytics or advanced capture tools by being laser-focused on the privacy use case. Automated redaction of files is an underserved use case in the market today.

DocuVision.ai is a web and/or API service that can be called for a bulk analysis of historical content, as part of a workflow, or a user can use the web interface to assess and redact documents. The interface is intuitive and allows for human-in-the-loop adjustments to the automated redactions. A dashboard view allows users to add additional redactions or to remove automated redactions simply. Processed files are transferred to the content system of choice.

The DocuVision.ai service is available as a subscription service with packages based on the number of pages processed. The application is available as a cloud-deployed application or can be deployed into the customer's virtual private cloud or on-premises servers.

**Challenges:** There has been an explosion of vendors that take advantage of improved machine learning (ML), computer vision and natural language processing (NLP) to assess files and emails, and many content services platforms have content intelligence capabilities built into their platform. Additionally, there is an entire market of file analytics tools that are selling into this marketspace. Most of these capabilities are not built specifically for the privacy use case. But organizations might feel they don't need a dedicated service such as DocuVision.ai when they have a tool that can get them “close enough.”

**Who Should Care:** Digital workplace application leaders and application leaders in financial, legal services, government services, healthcare and health insurance, and other industries with large amounts of personal information should consider DocuVision.ai to support their privacy efforts. The redaction capabilities will also be of interest to legal and compliance, security and privacy leaders regardless of industry as they look for tools to provide automated redaction capabilities.

**Front**
San Francisco, Bay Area, U.S. (www.frontapp.com)

**Analysis by Pankil Sheth**

**Why Cool:** Front is cool because it offers a front-end platform to seamlessly unify conversations across teams on different collaboration and customer service platforms. This helps multivendor organizations to reduce their information silos and prevent users juggling between multiple applications, and allows them to deal with customer communications from a unified platform. Federation within the customer service and unified communications and collaboration (UCC) tools was in high demand since years and, yet are vendors, offering varying degrees of automation for such services. Front offers organizations a shared perspective on email and route messages to individuals within a team, based on keywords, sender and time of day to increase productivity and faster resolution time. It also helps organizations understand trends across customer communication channels and messages to provide holistic insights
and analysis to fuel the business. This allows organizations to create a portfolio from modern, best-of-breed enterprise vendors to be utilized in a best way. Fragmentation of the UCC application market will continue, with no single platform likely to offer everything to rule them all. This also reduces the internal friction within organizations to make technical and political decisions when selecting one-size-fits-all solutions, as the chief concern of the organization is consolidation of tools and increased productivity.

**Challenges:** Front faces a number of challenges including:

- Organizations with multiple communication and collaboration platforms must also prove that these silos are real business impediments before spending additional money on Front. If most teams are fixed with a tight group of collaborators, there may not be enough business cases for connecting multiple platforms.

- Recipient limit could be a problem for larger organizations, as Front currently offers up to 200 recipients for email and SMS for its outbound sequencing feature, and one recipient for direct messaging via most of the social media platforms (e.g., Twitter DM). Consolidation of tools is mostly required in larger enterprises and these limits could affect the selection process for Front.

- Microsoft Office 365 and Slack providing mammoth competition to each other is certainly the biggest hurdle for Front as well. Most UCC and customer communication application vendors are trying to consolidate their services and started offering tight integration within a single tool such as Teams.

**Who Should Care:** Customer service and digital workplace application leaders having multiple platforms for workstream collaboration and customer service products should consider Front. Front can be used as an aggregator platform for organizations that have different team-specific tools (to capture a fraction of relevant conversation), or require omnichannel analytics and customized workflows across teams and channels. Organizations can bypass all the extra steps they were taking because of Front, as all their communications are now centrally located in one application.

**Krisp**

Berkley, California, U.S. (www.krisp.ai)

*Analysis by: Steve Blood*

**Why Cool:** Canceling office chatter and background noise has traditionally been a feature of enterprise-grade headsets from vendors such as Poly and Jabra. Krisp brings AI-powered noise cancellation software to the primary devices and applications being used by digital workplace and customer service employees — PCs, Macs, virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) and smartphones.

Krisp negates the need for expensive noise-canceling hardware by adding a software layer between the physical microphone on the employee’s device in use and the meetings or contact center application. This enables the same noise canceling application to be used across multiple communications applications. Using noise-canceling software powered by Krisp neural network (developed from
collecting and listening to tens of thousands of noises, speakers and minutes of conversations), Krisp is able to mute background noise coming to the headset/speaker as well as muting noise emanating in the vicinity of the user’s microphone.

Krisp has a freemium offer, enabling 120 minutes of use per week free of charge to help drive adoption of its software. Additionally, there are annual plans starting at $60 for up to three devices and enterprise plans with volume discounts.

Headsets with active noise cancellation (ANC) typically cost between $100 and $400 USD and may need to be replaced within two to three years due to breakages or other issues. Multiple enterprise devices for meetings can also mean multiple noise-canceling headsets. Enabling noise canceling in software offers a lower total cost of ownership as employees can be provided with cheaper USB/Bluetooth headsets or use their own in meetings.

Challenges: Noise suppression is already being offered by meetings providers such as Zoom and Microsoft. As more work collaboration providers include noise cancelation/suppression as a complementary capability, Krisp will be challenged to demonstrate the incremental benefit of a paid offer. In the last year, it has increased its freemium offer to 120 minutes per week from 60 minutes and is adding new features such as personal noise cancelation to improve user experience (UX) and value. Finding the right price point will be key to success but the licensing approach is consistent software as a service (SaaS) procurement for digital workplace and contact center environments.

Who Should Care: Digital workplace leaders interested in improving the quality of internal meetings and customer-facing communications. As flexible working has expanded following COVID-19, we can expect more communications, both internal and external, will be disrupted by background noise from fewer closed spaces in the office and less than optimal work at home environments. As more meetings are conducted remotely, the need to counter the employee fatigue caused by suboptimal audio configurations is a critical priority.

Acronym Key and Glossary Terms

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<th>ANC</th>
<th>active noise cancellation</th>
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<td>UCC</td>
<td>unified communications and collaboration</td>
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Evidence

1. “Gartner CFO Survey Reveals 74% Intend to Shift Some Employees to Remote Work Permanently,” Gartner Newsroom.

Recommended by the Authors

9 Predictions for the Post-COVID Future of Work