TECH CONNECT™
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Conference Agenda
May 3, 2023

8:00 am   **Arrivals/Expo Opens**

8:30 am   **Welcome** by Jeff Tollefson, President & CEO, Minnesota Technology Association

Morning Keynote

"Technological Disruption: A Futurist's Perspective"
Matt Versaggi

This presentation will explore the radical changes that we are witnessing as technology, globalism, politics, economics, culture, and the nature of work all undergo unsettling change. It might seem at times that these changes threaten foundational ideas like value, utility and truth. Our morning keynote, Matt Versaggi, is a futurist who most recently served as Distinguished Engineer and Senior Director of Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Technology for the Advanced Technology Division of Optum. Matt will leverage his decades of experience and insights in the fields of quantum computing, artificial intelligence, and advanced technology to guide our MnTech community through these vectors of disruption, structural shifts, and the underlying forces impacting the world of technology in 2023 and beyond.

9:30 am   **Break**

9:50 am   **Choice of Breakouts - 50 minutes each**

Using Zero Distance and Product Tools to Innnovate in Healthcare - A Case Study
Presented by: Creg Schumann, Nathan Koering, & Jim Christy - Turnberry Solutions
This panel presentation will describe how a group was put together to explore in "dark space" to find solutions where none previously existed for a specific customer segment. We will talk about the facilitation methods, the tools, and the ideas that were generated. This discussion will be further augmented by talking about and showing what came to life from those innovation ideas and is now serving a large population of people in the low acuity behavior health space today. We will talk about the advantages of this approach and how the launch of services and digital tools can hit the mark faster by including the voice of these customers (Zero Distance) and by modeling what could be using some known product tools.

The Land O'Lakes Journey From Project-Centric IT to an Agile Operating Model
Presented by: Rich Bellefeuille - Land O'Lakes
We'll follow the Land O'Lakes journey from a more traditional, Project-centric organization to one that is designed around continuously-funded Product teams working directly with the business. This case study explores the transformational journey and how our Product and Capability teams are building trust with our business.

Scope Creep: Damned if I Do, Damned if I Don't
Presented by: Justin Grammens - Lab651
While everyone likes to share successes, let's discuss the reality of software development. Projects are messy with lots of competing interests and challenges. One of these challenges that comes up often is scope creep. As software developers, we can be pulled in many different directions to not only help make the best product that we can, but stay focused on the scope of what's expected. Sometimes your job feels like: "Damned If I Do, Damned If I Don't". Let's discuss the reality of the situation and some techniques and tools to help.

FinOps at Target
Presented by: Kim Wier, Ron Tatro - Target
Gartner, Inc. forecasts that in 2023, worldwide public cloud spending will grow 20.7% to total $591.8 billion. The practice of FinOps, or cloud financial management, is also growing as companies look to control their cloud costs. In this session, representatives from Target will share their journey and success in adopting the FinOps framework and share an overview of FinOps, how Target has applied the concepts, and how they intend to bring FinOps to their private and public cloud operations.

Exploring OpenAI: Practical Applications for Real-World Problem Solving
Presented by: Nick Kwiecien, Ph.D. - Microsoft
OpenAI has been making waves in the AI industry with its cutting-edge research and development. In this presentation, we will explore the practical applications of OpenAI and how it can be used to solve real-world problems. We will also discuss AI prompt design tips and tricks that can help you get the most out of your AI models. By the end of this presentation, you will have a better understanding of how OpenAI works and how you can use it to improve your business operations.

Hidden Data Assets: Unlocking the Monetary Value of Your Data
Presented by: Asim Mohammad & Meredith Murphy - Grant Thornton

10:40 am   Break

11:00 am   Choice of Breakouts - 50 minutes each

Powering Our People With Digital Workforce Technology
Presented by: Steve Burk, Theresa Dolezal, Jason Brown, Anna Pohmer, Thomas Panikkar - Xcel Energy
We deal with friction every day in our personal and business lives. Join Xcel Energy panelists for a discussion on how the team is modernizing our workforce, removing friction through digital workforce technology. Among other things, the panel will discuss stakeholder engagement across diverse populations and the ways new technologies are improving employee and customer experiences.

De"Mist"ifying AI
Presented by: Gene Sawyer - Juniper Networks
Take the mystery out of AI and learn how enterprises, healthcare, educators and manufacturers are digitizing and benefiting from location specific AI services. Relevant scenarios for location-aware AI services include: Retailers trying to transform customer experience in store; Higher ed campuses transforming student experience on campuses; Manufacturing adding efficiencies using location-based Services; Enterprises wanting to efficiently operate in Open Workspace and digital workspaces. This session will provide an overview of what is possible and the benefits obtained through client case studies while highlighting the use of Juniper's approach and MIST product as a possible pathway for companies to dramatically accelerate their AI journey and harness the power of location-aware AI.

The Art of Personalization with AI/ML: Optimizing Conversion by Showing Customers What They Want
Presented by: Matt Yates & Max Lindquist - Launch by NTT Data
Being shown personalized, similar, and complementary products has shifted from being a wow-factor to expected functionality. This doesn't mean that traversing the rough seas of personalization has gotten easier. This session will discuss the who, what, where, why, and how of implementing custom personalization capabilities into modern retail websites. Be ready to do a technical deep-dive into an actual case study of a large fashion retailer building out such a solution in Google Cloud Platform.

Turn Your Big Ideas into Apps with High-Performance Low-Code
Presented by: Sean Mee - OutSystems
Organizations and IT leaders are under pressure to deliver new digital products faster than ever. Many organizations use low-code development platforms to transform and accelerate their software delivery strategies. But, not all low-code development platforms are created equally. Building serious apps on an innovative high-performance low-code platform addresses your biggest business challenges, including: the tech talent shortage and developer productivity, your growing application backlog, and app speed to market by delivering 10x faster than traditional development platform.

Productize Undifferentiated Engineering
Presented by: Andy Domeier - SPS Commerce
Maximizing the focus your developers give to solving customer problems and bringing awesome features to market is key to winning and staying in the lead in your market. This talk will explore the story of how SPS has adopted internal platform solutions as a product and how it's helping maintain a leadership position in the market. Solving undifferentiated engineering as a product is the key to allowing product developers to focus their efforts on what matters the most, your customers!

The Era of Generative AI
Presented by: Bill Wong - Info-Tech

In today's fast-paced and rapidly changing world, businesses are always seeking to leverage new technologies to remain competitive and relevant. Generative AI applications, like ChatGPT, are transforming the way we approach complex problems and helping organizations deliver better business outcomes. However, Generative AI also comes with limitations and risk, which is why organizations are seeking best practices for the adoption of this technology. Leading firms are developing policies for its use that is aligned to their organization's mission and objectives. Key takeaways from this session will include: Understanding the hype and reality behind Generative AI; Understanding key use cases and challenges adopting generative AI; Understanding the role of responsible AI; Developing organizational policies for the use of Generative AI.

11:50 am   Lunch

12:20 pm   Mid-day Keynote

"Empowering Our Future Through Science"
Dr. Jayshree Seth - Chief Science Advocate & Corporate Scientist - 3M

During this mid-day keynote, attendees will have the opportunity to connect with the insights of an award-winning engineer for an engaging and personal perspective on the potential of a world recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Jayshree Seth zooms in on the issues of science and leadership through the lens of personal and professional transitions, reflections, and calls to action.

Jayshree Seth, Ph.D., is an author, internationally sought-after speaker, career engineer, prolific inventor, distinguished alumni, and occasional songwriter. As a Corporate Scientist at 3M who holds 77 patents for a variety of innovations, she was appointed 3M's first ever Chief Science Advocate in 2018. Jayshree will share her scientific knowledge, technical expertise, and professional experience to illuminate the exciting accomplishments of the scientific community and the unlimited transformational potential for STEM fields to continue to inspire hope for our future. Jayshree will challenge each of us to engage in the opportunities we have to invest our own personal experience into our work and encourage us to inspire our young people to see the potential contributions they can make within STEM careers, so that future innovations solve challenges that are representative of our inclusive and diverse global community.

All conference participants will receive a free copy of her book, *The Heart of Science – Engineering Fine Print*. All proceeds from the books purchased by MnTech will go to a scholarship for underrepresented minority women in STEM, administered by the Society of Women Engineers.

1:00 pm   Break

1:15 pm   Choice of Breakouts - 50 minutes each

Cybersecurity State of the Union: 2023+
Presented by: Aaron Warner - Procircular

How do you recognize important changes or know what requires your urgent attention in the chaotic world of cybersecurity? This presentation will bring some clarity to the chaos. ProCircular's CEO Aaron R. Warner has compiled trends from working with clients throughout the country, mixed it with intelligence from various agencies, and added a splash of insights on today's economic and social change. The result is the "Cybersecurity State Union - 2023", where Aaron will cover major trends such as cyber insurance demands, recession impact, and the implications of AI on security.

Taking a Trip to the Optometrist - User Lens vs the IT Lens
Presented by: Dale Henninger - CHS, Inc.

This session explores the different lenses that we look through when building products and services. What are the benefits and disadvantages of the IT lens and how can we find the user lens and look at solutions from the customer's perspective? We will first look at various non-IT customer service/product examples that use a truly customer-centric approach and then explore various examples of IT solutions that both met and missed the mark from a customer lens perspective.

"Simplified, Easy, No Problem": Lessons from a Real-World Cloud Data Migration Project
Presented by: Brian Seebacher - Hargrove & Associates, Inc.
The vendors say migrating your data platforms to the cloud is cheap, fast, and easier than ever. How does one separate the truth from the hype? An experienced small-company technologist shares his thoughts and observations from a real-world project that brought a decades-old mission-critical reporting system into the cloud era. We'll delve into the finer points and discuss planning, execution, acceptance, and integration.

Thawing the Frozen Middle: Helping Middle Managers Adopt a Product Model
Presented by: Barb Johnson, Jill Ronk, Steve Bauer, Laura Carlson - Thrivent
This session focuses on the unique challenges of middle management when dealing with the realities of performing while transforming. The work doesn't stop while managers adopt new behaviors, supporting their teams through change, and collaborating with peers who are at different places in their own journey. It's enough to freeze the most seasoned of middle managers. Join a panel of leaders from Thrivent as they share their real-life examples with implementing a product operating model and managing through major transformation.

Expanding Enterprise Value Through IT Assessments
Presented by: Michael Matthews - CREO
This session will introduce technology leaders to the importance of a meaningful assessment process and approach as a critical first step towards unlocking enterprise value with and through technology. This session is ideal if you are: looking to drive performance improvement within IT; going through a digital transformation; taking on a new IT leadership role, a new team or beginning with a new company; looking to make strategic IT investments or expand on an existing investment thesis; looking to identify and respond to areas of opportunity or concern within your company's digital ecosystem. CREO has developed an efficient approach to streamline this assessment and will share the benefits of their Quality of Technology (QoX.T®) instrument and process. They will illustrate the value of having a reliable and repeatable approach to gather the insights and information required for you to align your limited resources and teams toward your organization's greatest potential outcomes.

Accelerate your Organization's Data and Analytics Journey: Data Literacy Program Pillars and Best Practices
Presented by: Edmund Tran - Qlik
Qlik's recent report developed in collaboration with the Data Literacy Project and The Future Laboratory, Data Literacy: The Upskilling Evolution, shows that data literacy is set to be the most in-demand skill by 2030. Hear more from Qlik, a leader in Data Literacy programs on common pitfalls as well as pillars for a successful Data Literacy practice that empowers users to ask the right questions of their data, obtain knowledge, make decisions and communicate those decisions to drive top and bottom-line performance.

2:05 pm   Break

2:15 pm   Choice of Breakouts - 50 minutes each

How Analytics is Disrupting Every Industry - Including Yours
Presented by: Alex Cook & Jett Robinson - Inspire11
We are living in a golden age of data and analytics. Advances in automation, AI/ML, cloud, and other technologies have already begun disrupting every industry. This session will take you through a whirlwind tour of some of those technologies and how industries - even those traditionally immune from disruption - are being affected. We'll show some real-life use cases, talk through the art of the possible, discuss how further advances are likely to impact everyone, and talk some through approaches for how to meet this challenge.

User Centered Design (UCD) - Insights for Innovative Technologies
Presented by: Emmanuel Letsu-Dake, PhD - U.S. Bank
The Human Factors discipline has always been essential in safety critical industries such as aviation, and healthcare. With emerging complex technologies pervasive and applicable across multiple industries, human factors considerations are becoming more and more relevant to everyday applications. This session will provide an overview of human factors with an emphasis on user-centered design (UCD). Using relevant examples, it will review UCD touchpoints for current innovative technologies and discuss key UCD challenges and considerations for these innovative technologies.

The Future Fit Digital Organization: What Does the Data Say?
Presented by: Charles Betz - Forrester Research
Forrester Research has been investigating the practices of high performing digital and IT organizations for many years and has developed a deep understanding of what successful IT looks like. This session will discuss how Forrester's years-long program of extensive surveys – encompassing tens of thousands of responses and millions of data points – analyzed with cutting edge statistical analysis, accompanied by hundreds of case interviews, has resulted in compelling and repeatable findings showing the importance of customer centricity, DevOps, and related practices to superior IT performance.

Give Up and Go Home - The Impossibility of Managing Hybrid Cloud
Presented by: Michael Downs - **Evolving Solutions**

Cloud has changed business forever. On demand services and data and universal access revolutionized business transformation, providing boundless options for experimentation and trialing cutting-edge ideas. It's also created an exponentially more complex landscape to manage. The parallel rise of Artificial Intelligence provides an opportunity to address this complexity. Adopting AI capabilities and techniques as part of an IT delivery strategy can address the cognitive burden.

Prepare for Disruptions with Strategic Foresight
Presented by: Lisa Abendroth, PhD - **University of St. Thomas**

Disruption is inevitable, but it is not unforeseeable. In this session, you will learn how you and your organization can become future ready. We will start with scanning for Signals of Change – small, localized innovations that have the potential to disrupt the status quo. Next, you will be introduced to a Futures Wheel to help you imagine potential consequences of an innovation or disruption. Together, these tools allow you to plan for the future to remain adaptable and resilient.

3:05 pm   **Break**

3:15 pm   **Leadership Panel**

Steve Arsenault - Chief Information Officer at APi Group
David Bingenheimer - Chief Information Officer at Ecolab
David Black - Chief Information Officer at CHS
Chris Chapman - Chief Information Officer (Commercial) at Thrivent
Julie Durham - Chief Technology Officer at United Healthcare
Facilitated by Jeff Tollefson - President & CEO at the Minnesota Technology Association

4:00 pm   **Happy Hour & Networking**

5:00 pm   **Conference Concludes**