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## The Consumerization of IT: Adoption, Transformation, and Disruption

The consumerization of IT represents a fundamental shift in the locus of IT innovation, from large enterprises to the consumer sector. CIOs are not going to be able to resist the pressure coming from the boardroom to adopt new technologies, according to Lemuel Lasher, president, Global Business Solutions Group, and Chief Innovation Officer of CSC. Instead, Lasher believes that CIOs should embrace this change and become proactive advisors and strategic partners to help their organizations adapt to a more consumer-based model.

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**Q: What does the consumerization of IT mean for CIOs?**

**A:** They will need to rethink their role. Rather than being the custodian of the estate, the CIO should become the custodian of the organization's architecture and operating model, acting as digital strategist of the enterprise—and the orchestrator of change.

**Q: What are some of the challenges for CIOs?**

**A:** First, CIOs will have to confront all of the security, compatibility, and integration issues associated with consumer-based technologies. Next, it's critical that CIOs proactively formulate policies that not only provide employees with freedom of choice, but also assure that the employees take on greater responsibility. When the CEO wants to connect his or her iPad to the system, you'd better either have a good reason why you don't do it—or you do it pretty quickly.

Finally, the dynamics of running an IT organization have changed. In the past, new technologies came from the IT organization. They are now coming from the employees. As a result, IT decision-making and spending is more dispersed throughout the organization.

**Q: How quickly do you see organizations adopting consumer-centric technologies?**

**A:** Everyone is going to adopt these technologies. But the rate of adoption will vary by industry, according to each company's specific business model. The first barrier to adopting new technologies is the level of regulation and security that exists in the industry. The second is the level of digitization of key products and services. Organizations that are in the digital information space will change more quickly than those that are in the physical product space.

**Q: Are there any risks associated with the consumerization of IT?**

**A:** Going down this road is not without risk. CIOs need to be very clear of the strategic choices around the data they expose to consumer-centric technology and put into the cloud. There are four constraining elements that limit the level of cloud adoption. The first is the security and integrity of corporate data. It's important to consider who owns the data and how they can best protect the assets that are inside the enterprise.

Secondly, enterprisewide IT shops run very high levels of availability for mission-critical applications—that doesn't exist in the cloud environment. As a CIO, you must consider how you can assure the operational integrity and performance of your business when you're running a public infrastructure in the cloud. And then there's systems integration. For example, you can have software as a service, but you also have the challenge of integrating that data into the enterprise and ensuring that the business processes still operate at peak efficiency.

Finally, what's the economic benefit to your organization? If you're prepared to expose the enterprise to downgraded operational performance or a heightened risk of security, there had better be a substantial cost benefit.

**Q: What does the consumerization of IT mean for the future?**

**A:** We're 20 years into a 40-year cycle of technological innovation. As consumer-based technology becomes more and more pervasive, there's going to be more innovation, change, and growth in the next 20 years than we've seen in the last 20 years. You're going to see a very different world of corporate IT. It's going to look a lot more like the consumer space than the corporate enterprise space.