

# The Ongoing Evolution of Jobsite Connectivity

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## INSIDE TECH'S POTENTIAL TO INTEGRATE INFORMATION FOR MORE EFFICIENT WORKFLOWS

The vision is there. Wouldn't it be great if the entire jobsite — the general contractor, subs, designers, owners, equipment vendors, and material suppliers — were all working in sync with the data that shifts with each condition change, progress report, change order, telematics warning, and machine inspection? If the right people got the right information at the right time to make informed decisions? This one-dashboard vision is much easier said than done. The journey of one equipment manager illuminates the roadblocks. Several years ago, Langdon Mitchell, equipment division general manager for heavy civil contractor Morgan Corp., needed someone to physically go machine by machine to update the software in

The next big hurdle: each original equipment manufacturer (OEM) had its own proprietary telematics portal. Like most

view from all the disparate systems was clunky and time-consuming, Mitchell said.

The Spartanburg, South Carolina, company is now using a third-party product that amalgamates the information from

equipment. "It's become a single source of truth," Mitchell said. "Beyond the raw telematics data, it's allowing us to have tools to have actionable items."

But more is needed, said Will Hipp, equipment data analyst with Morgan. "Our eventual goal is to have all the project managers on board so they can see the machines on other jobsites and identify any machines that have little utilization."

That involves getting dynamic project schedules to match up

many or not enough machines. "That is one of the biggest tasks we have: making sure that machines are in the right place at the right time," Mitchell said.

## Jobsite Connectivity Is Complex

The Morgan Corp. story shows the information needs of one




revisions is critical, said Lyle Ballou, GPS manager for DXI Construction in Churchville, Maryland.

“We are managing 65 active jobs as we speak, and we have to manage the GPS info as different crews move in and out of different jobs weekly, sometimes daily.” DXI Construction juggles the workload for 51 different crews in three different states, which necessitates being able to instantly connect and “program” each crew for the work to be performed.

“The investment we have made has eliminated not being able to work, because we have to wait for stakeout, or wait for a program to be driven to a job and downloaded,” Ballou added.

But don’t think jobsite connectivity will solve all problems, Bretz warned. “It’s likely it will reveal more issues and create a whole new aspect of managing jobsites and machines because it opens up a lot of information that wasn’t immediately available,” he said.

“The connected jobsite concept is something I’m passionate about and I want to see grow,” said L’Heureux. “It will help with the disconnect we see daily between companies, engineers, even internally. It will create more of a community if we can share this data.” 

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## What’s the Right Solution?

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One barrier to jobsite connectivity is the sheer choice of tech options out there, said Jim Bretz, connectivity services support manager at Volvo Construction Equipment.

“Customers don’t know what to choose,” he said. Fears about

“It’s so fragmented right now there with the number of solutions,” agreed Mitchell. “One company has a cool answer for one thing, and another company has a cool answer for another thing. How do you now bring that information into the whole so you can make decisions?”

“The different solutions can be siloed, which makes it hard to have cross compatibility,” added L’Heureux. “If providers get too proprietary, it can hurt the end user.”

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## Tech’s Focus on Construction

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“I love the attention the industry is now getting,” said Anetsberger. “People are seeing that it’s either ripe for digital disruption or that there must be an easier way.”

Mitchell agreed: “What is exciting in our industry right now is how technology is really, really ramping up.” Contractors will be able to piggyback on what’s happening in the broader technology space. In addition to jobsite connectivity, these efforts will also lay the groundwork for autonomous machines.



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### About the Author

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### About the Article

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