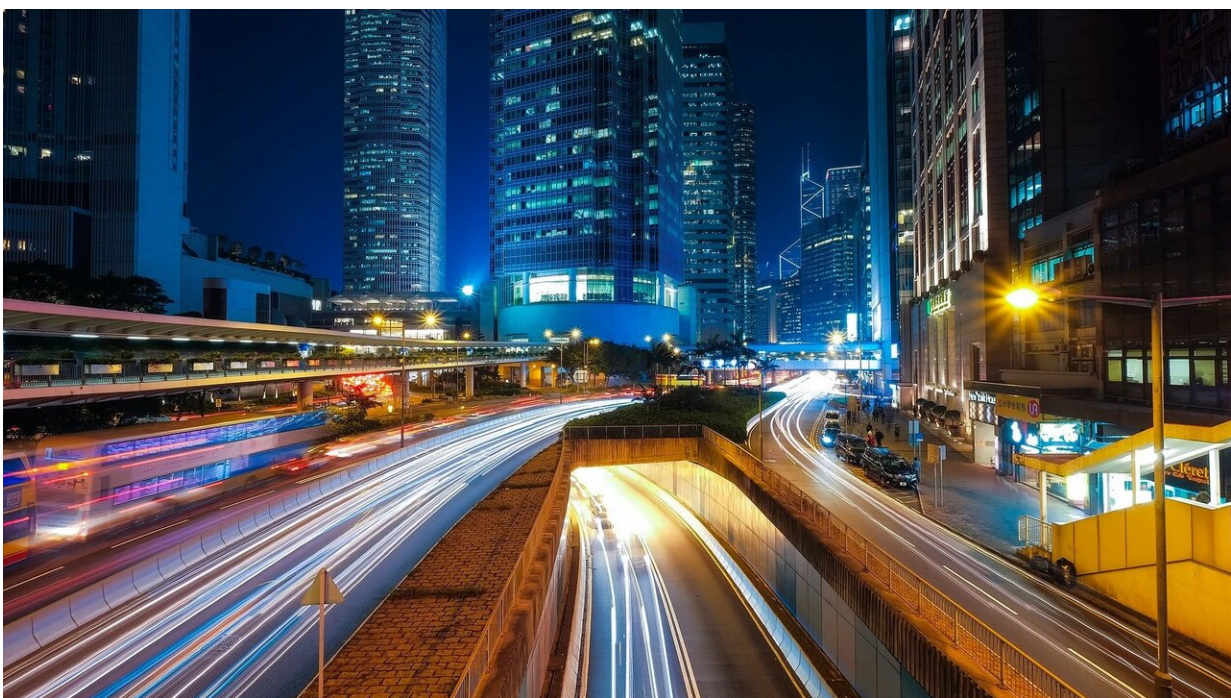


Qualcomm aims to jumpstart smart cities tech with new plug and play subscription suite

December 10 2020, by Mike Freeman



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

In a bid to jumpstart smart cities technologies, Qualcomm has launched a new Internet of Things Services Suite to help municipalities, schools, ports, hospitals and construction firms deploy digital tools without huge upfront costs.

The San Diego cellular technology giant is trying to remove some of the long-time roadblocks —namely tight budgets and supplier fragmentation—that have slowed smart cities and the Internet of Things market overall.

With partners, Qualcomm on Wednesday announced a plug and play IoT platform service sold as a subscription. It includes technologies ranging from wireless connectivity, hardware, software, data analytics and platform integration. The information is delivered to cities and other customers through a control center in real time.

"We think of it as chip to cloud—anything and everything required right out of the box to enable a smart [city](#), a smart space, smart factory, logistics, transit, digitation across the board," said Sanjeet Pandit, senior director and global head of smart cities for Qualcomm.

The company is targeting five sectors initially with its subscription service—smart cities/smart spaces such as airports, education, construction management, logistics and health care.

By the end of next year, it expects to offer its IoT Services Suite to 30 market sectors.

Infrastructure digitalization— and the data it generates—has raised privacy concerns, particularly around facial recognition software tied to [video cameras](#).

"The tech backlash is very real," said Karen Lightman, Executive Director of Metro21: Smart Cities Institute at Carnegie Mellon University.

Lightman sat on a virtual panel Wednesday at Qualcomm Smart Cities Accelerate conference. She said one major city "banned basically

everything" over privacy concerns around video.

"What worries me is then it becomes the baby out with the bathwater," she said. "Because if you could use things like edge computing, you can make sure that the data being sent is secure, it is confidential, and there is no risk of a hack."

Pandit said Qualcomm's platform offers basic security and safety video, not facial recognition. Cities also can opt for LIDAR sensors—lasers that detect objects but with limited detail.

Qualcomm is working with an unnamed university to help digitize its campus, said Pandit. Through cameras and other sensors, university operations personnel can see how many students are waiting at shuttle stops.

"Should we drive the bus to that particular stop or skip the next two because there are no students there?" said Pandit. "Shall we take a shorter route" to save gas and reduce emissions?

Building maintenance can analyze occupancy versus power usage to turn off lights on certain floors. Janitorial crews can send trucks to empty bins only when they are full.

"It could take six to nine months to realize, but then the cost savings would be very visible," said Pandit.

Though it has been touted for years, the Internet of Things—where everything from streetlights to medical devices are connected—has not reached its massive potential.

Part of the reason is that the industry is fragmented. Qualcomm has attempted to bring the industry together through its Smart Cities

Accelerator program, which has more than 300 members.

In addition, cities often balk at shifting money from pothole repair to connected cameras and other smart cities gear.

Qualcomm believes the subscription platform can help ease budget concerns. It has partnered with investment firm JPL on a \$75 million fund to help pay upfront costs for deploying the platform.

The company is talking with the city of El Cajon to become one of the first 5G digital cities on the subscription platform, said Pandit.

"We have proposed to them a complete command and [control center](#), artificial intelligence cameras, smart fleet management, citizen enablement, 5G connected fire trucks, augmented reality/virtual reality goggles and use case that would give first responders a complete view."

El Cajon city officials are considering Qualcomm's proposal and another one from Cox Communications. The city is looking at Chula Vista and Carlsbad, which have [smart city](#) strategic plans, to get ideas about what direction to go.

"Hopefully, we can be more forward in 2021," said Pandit.

©2020 The San Diego Union-Tribune.

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Qualcomm aims to jumpstart smart cities tech with new plug and play subscription suite (2020, December 10) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-12-qualcomm-aims-jumpstart-smart-cities.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--