[00:00:21] **Jen Sain (Host):** Hello everyone, and welcome to another episode of CI Conversations. As always, I'm your host, Jen Sain, and today we're going to be talking about CES 2024. And of course, we could probably do a 10 episode run on CES and still have more to talk about. But we're going to try to get to the stuff that we think would be most important for you to hear. So with that, I'm welcoming back to CI Conversations alumni, Tina Allan, Global Chief Data and Intelligence Officer at FCB, and Adam Simon, SVP Managing Director of IPG Media Lab. Welcome back, both of you. We're so glad to have you back. Thank you. Thanks for having us. Absolutely. So kind of before we get into the bright and shiny, I was kind of hoping to talk about Challenges, in the sense that, what do you both see as the most significant challenges that the tech industry is facing today, and how perhaps did CES address that?

[00:01:11] **Adam S:** I think the two things that I see, um, one are, is uh, regulation. Right. We're seeing increased government scrutiny on tech companies, particularly big tech companies. I don't think that that necessarily plays out at CES in any way. Uh, not directly, of course, but I think that that is one of the big things that we're, we have been watching in the past couple of years. And I think we'll, we'll definitely have an eye on going forward. And the other one that I would say is, uh, that everybody who is not Apple and Google are [00:01:40] currently looking for sort of a foothold in what might be the next platform beyond smartphones to really see mass consumer adoption. And that is definitely something that we see more of at CES, right?

[00:01:50] **Adam S:** There's definitely the Samsung's and LG's and Sony's of the world who are looking to ensure that they have a place in sort of the hardware supply chain for whatever might come next. And I don't think that was unique to this CES. I think that's something that we sort of see every year is, uh, some rough draft takes on what might be the next big hardware platform.

[00:02:09] **Adam S:** I like to think of CES sort of as the world's R& D lab. A lot of the stuff that we see on the show floor isn't, other than the most exciting stuff at least, isn't necessarily shipping immediately to consumers, but it is sort of being put out there in public to sort of gauge reaction and see where future investments might be made.

[00:02:26] **Tina A:** I think of two, um, that comes to mind. I think the first challenge really is everyone is circling around the consumer. Ton of consumer focus, but I think identity is going to be a huge challenge. I say that because I think identity matched with a little bit of even what Adam said before, this idea of creating trust architectures and security and cookie deprecation, like what is your identity solution going to be as we move into more of this AI and tech. So I think that's the first reality that I don't think many people are facing, because I think that's really complicated and not the fun stuff, but I think data and trust is going to be key. And then the second. Which I heard a lot about just talking to brands, clients, and even internal partners is really what is the future talent going to be?

[00:03:15] **Tina A:** I think what we are going to see is very quickly. And what I'm excited [00:03:20] about is a massive need for creativity. Also, you know, creativity that is really just fueled by the data and tech. And I think that. New world is super exciting, but I think people are going to have to change and evolve very quickly of their talent. They're bringing in roles, jobs and all of that. So I'm excited for the emerging of the data tech and creative, but I think it's coming a lot faster than people realize.

[00:03:46] **Jen Sain (Host):** Oh, that's awesome. And I'm both of your answers just there to spark like five more questions. So I just want to go back just for one second to, you know, what Adam was saying, you know, you were saying kind of, it's hard for those who are the behemoths of Apple and Google. Well, I wouldn't say to get attention, but those just, you know, those of course are the two biggies, but you mentioned other companies like LG and so on. Were there any, you know, not even in known brands, were there any startups, you know, not only in the tech hardware space, but really in any of the categories that were present? But any startups that really grabbed your attention as being really innovative and kind of on the cutting edge?

[00:04:19] **Adam S:** Um, I think one of the startups that grabbed some attention was Rabbit, which actually is launching hardware. They're an AI hardware startup. We've seen a number of these over the past six months or so really launch into public, uh, and start accepting pre orders. I think they sold 30, 000 or 40, 000 of their devices, uh, in the week of CES as pre orders. It's an interesting product. It's basically a hardware device that syncs up with your phone and, and, uh, laptop over the, through the cloud that is an AI interface to the apps and services that you're already using.

[00:04:52] **Adam S:** And the idea here, um, is very similar to the idea of things like Siri and Alexa, but that it can actually accomplish things for you. So if you

[00:05:00] say, you know, find me a hotel in, uh, London for a weekend to a month from now, it can actually do the hotel booking for you using, um, some web services that you sign into on their portal and then it actually, uh, you know, accomplishes the task for you. I think it's really interesting as a concept. I think that the reality is that if something like that is, does work very well and is, is actually something that consumers want, eventually it'll just get baked into our, our phones, uh, as a, as a layer on top of. Uh, sort of the app ecosystem. But I think, you know, as a startup, I think it was sort of an interesting and very bold move, uh, for them to take. And, uh, they captured a lot of attention at CES, even though, you know, they were a small independent VC backed startup.

[00:05:39] **Tina A:** I think the startups were the most exciting, to be honest. I have one in particular, and I had the pleasure of the CEO, Vincent at Firework, joined me. On stage at one of the IPG commerce, but they really are a video commerce shoppable video tech software that can engage with your website. And what I think is so amazing is this integration of just commerce and shoppable video and making it super easy to update your website. And I was just at the retail, the NRF this weekend, and they also just launched a sort of shoppable human. Bot assistant that's going to be in there. So I just think the speed of what we're looking at is in, in video and in shoppable and in personalized is really amazing. The technology and they got, I would say at the retail summit, they were just sort of like one of the leads that people were very interested in. So I think it's just really interesting.

[00:06:38] **Jen Sain (Host):** So to kind of go on [00:06:40] a little bit from that, because I do want to talk about what you both observed in terms of or had conversations about or, you know, even, you know, had, you know, activations or, you know, talked about, as you had mentioned just now, Tina, you know, I'd like to talk about how anything that you saw that might have an impact on the way marketers work with their clients or what clients will expect from agency partners. And you just talked a bit about commerce, and I'm sure that plays into it. I'd love to hear more about that. Or anything else, you know, you'd like to talk about in that vein. And of course you too, Adam.

[00:07:09] **Adam S:** Yeah. I mean, I think that the, um, at CES, since CES does tend to be a little bit more hardware focused than other events. I think that, you know, one of the more interesting angles that we always are are sort of. Looking at is what's happening in the connected home space. Last year, we saw the launch of Matter, which is sort of an interoperability standard that allows hardware makers to sort of builds to one standard, and then it will work with every ecosystem, Apple, Google, Samsung, Alexa, anything that The user

happens to want to use that was a little bit of a rocky launch it through most of the year.

[00:07:41] **Adam S:** It took a while for that to play out. We saw some, uh, some increased revisions to the standard sort of rolled out at CES this year. But I think one area that we've had our eyes on for a long time is the smart home and thinking about how that changes the way that brands that are sort of products that folks use and consume in their home, how that does have promise as not just a marketing channel, but also sort of a loyalty channel, a commerce channel. And I think we're starting to see around the edges starting to see that take hold as the smart home starts to mature and we start to see increased consumer adoption. I always think there is potential there that a lot of quite [00:08:20] tapping into yet, but I think that a lot of the stuff that we saw rolling out this year does sort of indicate that.

[00:08:25] **Adam S:** You know, the pieces are slowly lining up, and I think it's one of those things that it's slowly and then quickly. I think that we're getting to a place where maybe in a few years from now, but certainly before the end of the decade, we'll see brands really start to embrace connectivity in the home as a way to enable commerce and replenishment and subscription and things like that. Things that, you know, folks like Amazon have been talking about for years, but I think consumers have been a little slow to, uh, to adopt. Partially because of the technical barriers. And I think slowly, like I said, those technical barriers are coming down. And I think that, um, we're getting to a place where maybe CES and next year or the year after, we'll start to see some real interesting activations around enabling commerce and automated commerce inside the home.

[00:09:04] **Tina A:** I love that around sort of in the home is going to be everywhere too. And in the home is going to be commerce. I saw a theme that came through pretty clearly, which is, I'll call it collaborations and crossovers. And, you know, I think people think of collaborations historically as like, okay, we're going to collab and get an influencer. I thought it was really interesting around brand collaborations from sort of the everyday to the luxury. An amazing display was Reebok. Getting into mobility and partnering up with DeLorean to launch the first sort of EV Go-Kart meets Interactive. I mean like just those two brands coming together and the ability to really, to know the consumer of who would buy it and who would invest in it.

[00:09:51] **Tina A:** So I just love the elevation of the brands in that crossover. I think the other one in sort of collaboration and crossover, I loved what Garmin [00:10:00] was doing with. BMW and mobility. And so Garmin was, and

probably more from this idea of, you know, the potential of the data. So Garmin being your wearable watch and then Garmin in the car. And when the two come together, really the overlays of those data sets allow you to create a holistic view to get very. sort of understanding and predictive, which is so awesome. Right. Of like your Garmin watch says you didn't get a lot of sleep and your car is saying maybe you need new pads on your brakes and maybe, you know, the route you're taking, you need to, you know, readvise on what you're doing.

[00:10:38] **Tina A:** I was just all in with them. I'm like, this is the future because it's wearables meets mobility. Meets collaborative data sets that can talk to each other, but help you and help you along your journey. Um, I just think that was like super exciting and it was getting a lot of attention there because it really was so easy and seamless. to do the connection. So I think that was like another exciting moment at CES where you see, you know, the technology overlaps and the data to give you a holistic view. And then, like I said, I keep pushing that P of prediction, which I think we're going to see more and more of coming out of technology.

[00:11:19] **Jen Sain (Host):** You know, talking about prediction, and then so many of the things that you guys have been talking about has this element, and I don't want to take up too much time because it's everywhere, but. AI, but in the sense of what was really fresh and beyond what we've been talking about in 2023, I think one of you brought it up because I had read a lot about AI companions. And I think maybe Tina, you were talking about like [00:11:40] bots. And so, you know, that was new to me, I mean, from my perspective. So in any case, I was just wondering what was really fresh and interesting about AI, perhaps in a way that we haven't been looking at it or seeing or talking about it just yet.

[00:11:51] **Adam S:** Yeah, I mean, I think that we saw it's interesting going into CES, we really thought that we were going to see AI slopped on every single booth in the same way that, uh, you know, Alexa and Google home were when they had, uh, their launch, you know, five or so years ago. I think we saw less of that. Then we were expecting, which is good. I think we saw less sort of egregious use of AI, either sort of as a marketing term or even just being integrated into products that didn't really need it. I did notably see the world's first AI powered office chair, which it was sort of my, my joke, AI, uh, example that I, I'm, uh, I've been rolling out, uh, when talking about it with clients, but I.

[00:12:30] **Adam S:** I think that what that indicates to me, the fact that there weren't so many egregious sort of unnecessary uses of AI, uh, being shown off at CES, is that I think we're, we're moving past the hype phase of AI right now,

and we're moving into more of a deployment phase where I really think that luckily, fortunately, for the timing of CES, we've, we've gotten past the point where just calling something AI or integrating AI for the sake of, uh, perhaps saying you have AI is, uh, not really enough to get. attention anymore. It's not really going to capture anybody's attention. And we're really moving into an era and I think this will be true for most of 2024 of where consumers are looking for meaningful uses of AI, not just the marketing term, but like, what is it actually going to do for me? How is it actually going to help?

[00:13:15] **Adam S:** Um, and I think that Garmin example is a great example of like, you know, useful, [00:13:20] you know, smarts built on top of the data that they have access to. And I think that that's what we're going to see a lot of over the course of the next year or so is, okay, we have this data. How can we make it more actionable, more useful to the consumer, more engaging. And I think that, uh, you know, we're, we're slowly moving down that road, but I think that that is the thing that I have my eye on is just, what are we doing with the data that we have and how can we leverage AI to make it more useful and actionable for the consumer?

[00:13:44] **Tina A:** Yeah, I love that, Adam. I was thinking the same. My theme was, I'm so hopeful because I'm feeling AI has found purpose at CES. And what I mean by that is another example, AI and aging is not sort of a typical term or correlation that comes to mind, I'm sure at first, but you know, the reality is when you consider that 30 percent of the wealth In the U S alone is controlled by Americans over 70. It feels like investing in these consumers is a pretty strong bet. And I think at CES, what I saw that was really just inspiring, to be honest, is where AI is helping sort of the vulnerable or an aging populations, you know. Wearables to keep more active, devices to, you know, to assist with physical therapies or walking cognitive assistance for those struggling maybe with early Alzheimer's and personalized monitoring to help sort of everyone care.

[00:14:46] **Tina A:** For people. So I think that idea of utility, the idea of AI for good kind of, you know, it left me with very, a positive feeling and hope that I think this [00:15:00] real-time data and the AI can help improve the human condition. And I think that was sort of a delightful surprise. Cause everyone's thinking of all the negativity that's going to come. And I was really impressed at how quickly I think we're going to see it move into health and assistance and aging.

[00:15:18] **Jen Sain (Host):** Oh, I love that. Those are both just such fresh perspectives. I think it's very different than what we've been talking about. At

least on the podcast in terms of AI. And I love that hopefulness and that, you know, kind of moving past the hype phase now into the practical application that will actually affect everyday people's lives and for the better. I mean, certainly talking about aging and health and the wellness space does kind of, it moves it past is AI going to take our jobs, moves it into a real conversation and benefits.

[00:15:43] **Tina A:** So I think that's awesome. I think the other thing about just, you know, someone asked a question, even in one of my panels of like, you know, what do you think is going to stick? And what do you think is going to go? And I think to Adam's point about building it for utility for people who have a need who will use it. I think it was much more. We saw a lot of products that were very directive. So what gives me hope is I think everybody is sort of Listening to the consumer and listening to the need state and really creating for that need with a lot of the technology, which I think is very different than we've seen in past years where there's just been things made for hype, but no reality for applicability for what our biggest problems are today.

[00:16:23] **Jen Sain (Host):** We've been talking a lot about technology that can help people in their everyday life. You know, the Rabbit example, the Garmin example, the Reebok example. And Tina, you kind of touched on this earlier. I'd like to talk about the workplace or the future of work. And you had talked about marrying talent and creativity with that, you know, data and [00:16:40] Adam, you talked about the AI office chair, which isn't quite what I mean. And I say that being cheeky. Yeah. I was just wondering, you know, you were kind of post the great resignation, but there are, have been so many big shifts in the term in terms of how people work, the hybrid environment, talent recruitment, and all that stuff. Was there any, any technology or innovations present that you think will have a real impact on the future of work?

[00:17:03] **Adam S:** The thing that we're thinking about constantly is, um, just how increased flexibility in the workplace for how and when and where we work is, you know, still something that is, is I think seeping into the culture. And I think we are still watching, um, an evolution that, you know, obviously we, we've had that since, uh, 2020, but I think that, uh, it's still taking some time to see that the sort of second order effects of, uh, of that change in, um, what for at least a lot of Americans. And I think a lot of Folks globally is the most structured part of our week. Um, and I think that that flexibility is we're still seeing the downstream effects of, of those changes in terms of how cities work and, and where things are located in, in cities and, uh, uh, where people live in relation to those, uh, sort of business centers.

[00:17:49] **Adam S:** But I don't think that there was anything specifically at CES that was, uh, addressing that specifically. Other than, you know, the usual suspects of, uh, there were a lot of, uh, laptops and monitors. Microphones and speakers, you know?

[00:18:02] **Tina A:** Yeah, I would say, I don't know. It's sort of the future of companies I would throw out there. I think there are maybe just two. I think AI we heard across the board is an imperative and I think. it's calling for experimentation. So I think that might just change work. [00:18:20] It's not going to be perfect. You need to give permissions. And this is from like large companies. I mean, Microsoft was talking about this, right? I think the second is collaboration. So we're seeing a lot more. And once again, I thought Microsoft gave a good example of how they're bringing startups into large companies. So I don't think it's this world of like, You know, the creative is going in house or people are only doing startups. I think we're seeing more and more sort of better together, this collaboration of sort of internal teams, external teams, techs, startups, and the permission to experiment and build.

[00:18:56] **Tina A:** And honestly, the permission to fail forward, I think was a theme of people. I found it inspiring that, you know, we heard from. Large companies from Adobe and Microsoft and even everybody is very sort of welcoming and bringing everyone along. So I think there's this really nice mutuality happening and collaboration that, you know, we've all got to figure this out together and hold hands for good. And I found that more so probably than any other year that everyone is a little more together in that mission.

[00:19:33] **Jen Sain (Host):** Oh, that's awesome. I just love the hopefulness and the optimism. And yeah, I mean, you're right. I think that is a different tone than, you know, certainly even from just not being there, but just hearing, um, secondhand to kind of continue with the good vibes. I'd love to talk about some fun stuff. So I'll throw out three categories and you guys let me know if there was anything particularly interesting or innovative and that's gaming, entertainment, and smart cities. And of course, any other category that's not in those three, if that you're just like, [00:20:00] this was the coolest thing ever that you'd want to share.

[00:20:03] **Adam S:** I'll jump in on entertainment. I think that it was obviously not an intrinsic part of CES, but something that was, uh, sort of, uh, hard to miss, uh, being in Vegas, uh, was the Sphere. Um, I think that, uh, you know, we had the opportunity to take a tour of the Sphere. It is, uh, difficult to convey how impressive it actually is in person, inside.

[00:20:22] **Adam S:** Um, it is, obviously, we've, we've seen, especially in our industry, a lot of Chatter about the external of the external, the exosphere, as they call it, with all the brand activations that are happening there. But being inside it, it is much larger than you would suspect or that I suspected from seeing it from the outside. And I think that it did. Has a really immersive, uh, it's a really immersive environment. It, it really is, uh, very similar to an experience of using virtual reality, but without the headset. So you have that social experience of being in an audience with other folks and having, you know, the same reaction when a six story tall spider jumps straight at the camera.

[00:21:01] **Adam S:** And, and, uh, you know, scares you. But I think it's, it's part and parcel with something that we've been really tracking and thinking about in the larger experience economy, which is just this sort of emerging middle class of experiences that sits somewhere between what I would consider the high end, high touch live experience of going to a concert or a sporting event or live theater or a theme park. And then the home experience, which is also, you know, in the. process of getting upgraded with headsets and more immersive entertainment happening at home. We're increasingly seeing this sort of middle ground that is like true hybrid entertainment that blurs the lines between live and recorded [00:21:40] and immersive, um, and gives you a, a, a, Slightly different experience than we've really seen before, um, and we're really interested in this sort of emerging middle class of entertainment for, for the, the experience economy and, and seeing where, how that develops and, you know, what the audience for that looks like, um, and how big it can get.

[00:21:57] **Adam S:** As we see, obviously the sphere is just one example. There's other companies that are working on this. Cosm is the one that, uh, comes to mind, which is sort of making. sphere like theaters for um, that are first going to be used for live streaming of sporting events. So really interested to sort of see how over the next few years that middle class of the entertainment ecosystem starts to develop.

[00:22:18] **Tina A:** I totally agree. It was spheres everywhere. It really blew me away. So if you, if you haven't experienced it, I'm like highly recommend everyone check it out. I think I'll take the topic of gaming because I do think as we talk to clients and brands, you know, everybody is looking for that younger customer and there's no surprise that gaming is top of mind and figure that out. But what I loved about sort of seeing this idea of gaming is this idea of matching the future of I go back a little bit to commerce and loyalty, right? What do loyalty plans look like? And how is loyalty really including or immersing yourself in a gaming functionality? So I think there's going to be a

nice little merge of traditional CRM platforms meet sort of a gaming engagement.

[00:23:11] **Tina A:** I think it leads back to entertainment as well, but I do think there's a realization that the enemy is mundane. The enemy is boring. [00:23:20] And gaming also isn't just for the younger audience. It's for everyone. So I do see that lap over in gaming becoming in commerce, becoming in everything that's like a relationship with buying, with loyalty, with benefits. And then I would just also say just the entire experience that I think gaming is happening from sort of speaking as someone who highly invests in PlayStation, this idea of where gaming is also being sort of very much the virtual world and the real world and the environment of the gaming consoles. I thought that was very interesting.

[00:23:57] **Tina A:** I mean, I hopped on in to like, look at and try out what it really felt like. It's like race as an F1 driver. And, um, I think there's going to be an interesting in this sort of immersive world with sort of a gaming handset and versus like being as part of the game similar, you know, to what Adam was talking about before, as you talk about the sphere, we're talking about. Also, I would say video that's becoming curved that you can immerse yourself in or games being larger than a handheld or just not on a flat television. I think it's an exciting, it's going to be exciting to see how the technology speeds up. But also I think it's incumbent on us as marketers and creators to see how we can engage and sort of fun everyday life a little bit of. Of what that customer engagement is and gaming should be a big part of it because everyone wants a little bit of entertainment and fun.

[00:24:53] **Adam S:** I was just going to jump in and say, I think it's really interesting and something to keep an eye on that a lot of the [00:25:00] tools and technologies that have. traditionally only been used in the gaming space are now expanding into many other spaces, certainly, uh, in, in, in terms of production and, and also consumption of non-gaming entertainment, um, but also into social spaces, into healthcare. We saw a metaverse platform specifically for, for therapy where that was following sort of the, all of the guidelines and regulations around, um, providing actual mental healthcare in an immersive space, um, which is certainly something that I think that, uh, especially younger consumers who have grown up.

[00:25:31] **Adam S:** with these 3D immersive spaces their entire lives might be more inclined to engage in an environment like that where it's not a video call, it gives you some a little bit more comfortability, maybe just talking about your, your, your deepest thoughts and feelings. And I think, I just, I think it's really

interesting to watch as, uh, you know, gaming has been incredibly mainstream for so long and, and, and incredibly, uh, and, and just keeps getting bigger and bigger. But I think. Keeping an eye on the technologies and tools behind the scenes, not just games themselves, um, as they spread out into other industries is, uh, something that is going to be important in the next few years.

[00:26:08] **Jen Sain (Host):** All right. So as we kind of near the end of our time together, I think one of the best things about this conversation. was really bringing in kind of this like hope and optimism and positivity into a lot of these technologies, particularly AI, which could have, you know, kind of this nebulous cloud around it. I would love to hear from both of you what you think about that. If that's true, if it is true to you, any more color you can add around that positivity and hopefulness.

[00:26:31] **Tina A:** Sure. I left CES, as you can tell, super positive and hopeful that I think we can drive a lot more [00:26:40] quicker, purposeful, um, positive solutions with the technology and the opportunity AI offers us. I would say it's really what we do with it and how we are open to it, which is going to be critical. And then last, I would say is collaboration and all of us doing it together is key with all the challenges that abound from security and trust and data and compliance. I think there's another just massive opportunity for creativity and collaboration to solve some of the world's biggest problems. And I think we saw some super inspiring and hopeful examples at CES this year. That's awesome. Adam?

[00:27:21] **Adam S:** Yeah, I would agree. I think that technology is just another word for tools, and you can use them for for good or for evil, obviously, but I think we're seeing a lot of focus and attention on how we can turn the latest advances in things like AI into Uh, tools that are useful for everyday consumers, everyday workers, um, and that are not, uh, necessarily, uh, an existential threat, uh, that we have to be concerned about. Um, and I think that, uh, you know, those, that is ultimately, those are ultimately the, the choices that consumers will make. And I think that people want.

[00:27:53] **Adam S:** to be hopeful. They want to be excited about technology again. I think CES is a great place to see that excitement and sort of see the cutting-edge and a positive vision of the future. And I think we definitely saw that on the show floor this year.

[00:28:07] **Jen Sain (Host):** Awesome. Well, that is a wonderful note to end on. Thank you both so much for being here and coming back.We really appreciate it. And thank you so much to all of our listeners. Of course, this podcast and all

of our others are available on your favorite podcast app. As [00:28:20] well as a trove of other information and thought leadership from around the Interpublic network on intelligence.interpublic.com. Bye for now.

[00:28:28] **Outro:** Thank you for listening to the Collective Intelligence podcast for more marketing insights and ideas Please subscribe to this podcast or visit intelligence.interpublic.com