

## Harmon.ie CEO Says Email, Social Tools Should Complement One Another

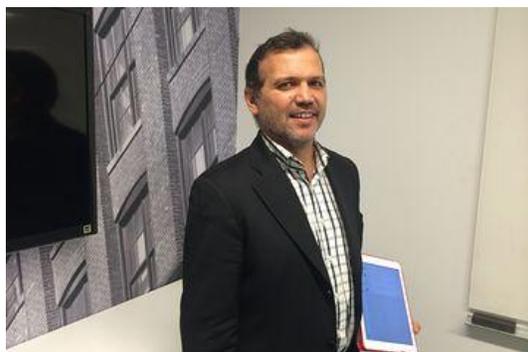


By [STEVE ROSENBUSH](#)

Editor

The problem with mobile and social tools in the workplace is that they are all about distraction, says Yaacov Cohen, the co-founder of [Harmon.ie](#), an Israeli-based company that is creating new social tools for the workplace.

"The phone is saying look at me. This is what is important. It is distracting," Mr. Cohen says. He says the reason that email persists in the workplace, despite the proliferation of newer tools, is that it is inherently about focus. That may contradict the common view of email as a time waster and distraction. But put aside the issue of volume and unwanted email, and email is "Consumer tools are about distraction," he says. "Conversely, email is a business tool that was invented by business. It is about business traction. It is task oriented. It is focus oriented."



Mr. Cohen believes that email will continue to play a critical role in business for the foreseeable future, although that doesn't mean he expects newer tools for collaboration and productivity to fade from the scene. He believes the future of collaboration lies in integrating email and social tools in a way that takes advantage of email's ability to concentrate minds and get things done. [Harmon.ie](#) is currently beta testing a new product called Collage, a universal inbox of sorts that allows people to combine email with a variety of social feeds, and employs machine learning algorithms to aggregate messages around user-selected topics.

[Harmon.ie](#), which got its start combining messages from various Microsoft Corp. platforms, is building new tools that will allow businesses to manage social feeds from companies such as [Salesforce.com Inc.](#), Microsoft's Yammer, and more.

Yaacov Cohen, the co-founder of [Harmon.ie](#)

Those efforts occur amid a fierce debate about the future of email. CIO Journal readers have been engaged in that one for months. "Email is still the way the world is run and managed, and will be for a long time to come," said [Stuart Kippelman](#), who manages email for a few thousand employees at [Covanta Energy Corp.](#)

"I am personally excited to see the emergence of enterprise social networks enabled by mobile, and I am hopeful that we can move organizations to a better way of collaborating and socializing," Paul Stokes, CIO of the University of Victoria in British Columbia wrote in [response](#).

Email is changing, Mr. Cohen allows. But he predicts that it will be around for a very long time, noting that even Facebook Inc. CIO Tim Campos says email remains the tool of choice in certain situations at Facebook. Of course, Mr. Campos says he finds Facebook more effective than email in the majority of situations. "We still use email," he told CIO Journal in February. "It has not disappeared. Email is still there."

Mr. Cohen says social media and email should complement one another. In his view, social media will provide the information that informs decision-making. When the time comes to make a decision, he finds that email is the tool of choice. "Email is our task manager. It is how we get things done," he says.

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