

Cisco
Laura Ipsen Podcast

Peter Shaplen; Cisco

Laura Ipsen; Cisco; SVP of Global Policy and Government Affairs, and Co-Chair of Eco Board

Peter Shaplen: Welcome to this podcast series and ongoing conversation about *Trends, Technology, and Business*. For Cisco, I'm Peter Shaplen. Laura Ipsen is Cisco's Senior Vice President of Global Policy and Government Affairs. She's also Co-chair of Cisco's Eco Board, focusing, of course, on environmental issues. Nice to meet you.

Laura Ipsen: Nice to meet you. Thanks, Peter.

Peter Shaplen: So I'm curious. Define the evolution of green here at Cisco.

Laura Ipsen: Well, first, I think it is about doing the right thing, about how we collaborate across organizations to build out new models of dealing with environmental issues. We've been focused on compliance in our products, from getting lead out of them. We've been focused on energy consumption. What's different today than it was probably 10 years ago is that we're all talking about green in a new way. It's really becoming part of our DNA to achieve our customers' green goals.

I think that strategy always leads back to our customers and our employees. How do we develop functionality and power efficiency at the same time? What's possible with smart grids or smart buildings? So I think it's inclusive, and it's socially responsible, and it's innovation.

Peter Shaplen: There are a lot of companies that have embraced sort of a lifecycle approach to their products, from the way they're designed, manufactured, shipped, recycled. Why isn't it enough just to make a better, more efficient server, for instance, and call it a day?

Laura Ipsen: It's not just about each product. You have to look at the cradle-to-grave approach from when a product's born to how you retire it. If we just looked at a power efficiency per product in a bits-per-watt comparison, we really wouldn't achieve the innovative solutions of saying, "How do we build a whole entire green network?" The intelligent network can know when you leave for a week on vacation, your phone, your seven-watt IP phone, which we adore, that has a lot of functionality, knows to go to sleep and be on basically life support, that it's not going to be powered up 24 by 7.

So it's the network and the intelligence in the network that makes everything more green. It's not a product-by-product idea for us. Going green has to be good for business, as well, and that is going to be the most sustainable pathway for us to move forward with technology.

I think this is a cultural issue of convenience, and we all know if we're going to be more green, we're going to have to inconvenience ourselves a little bit. It's about changing the culture, and I think whether you're a company, a city, or a country, people know that cultures have to change.

Peter Shaplen: Explain for me how you see the relationship, the intertwined relationship between IT and ET, energy technology.

Laura Ipsen: Well, I think if we do it right, IT is going to have an accelerator impact on energy technology and how we use renewables in the future, how we innovate within the grid to make it more productive and build out smart homes and smart buildings. The utilities have a huge opportunity to innovate and not only provide energy more efficiently but also to look at new revenue streams, as well. I think there's some that are incredibly innovative, like PG&E and Duke Energy.

So I think it's really seeing what is the art of the possible, not just about the demand generation and power shaving but about business models for the future. You get them more excited to say, "Let's make that change."

Peter Shaplen: Is green the equalizer?

Laura Ipsen: I think that green is an equalizer, and our hope is that it will ultimately be also a great optimizer of everything that we do. Technology is going to be key, you know. The Internet is one of the biggest green equalizers of all in terms of business-to-business communications, teleworking, and how we're achieving our green goals. So I think if a river runs through it, we hope it's going to be network-based intelligence that will make us all more green.

Peter Shaplen: Does broadband play a role in all this?

Laura Ipsen: Absolutely. Some of the estimates -- it's going to be about a billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions can be saved over the next 10 years through IT infrastructure and broadband, so broadband is going to accelerate our ability for teleworking, for business to business, and business-to-consumer transactions, so we see it as a critical player in terms of environmental sustainability.

Peter Shaplen: I understand the network makes that possible. What is it about the network that makes them hesitant?

Laura Ipsen: I think it's new. Part of it is interoperability. How do you bring this new technology in and not disrupt the business? It's critical infrastructure. It's security of the network. It's also about making sure that you have the standards that are necessary and the regulatory environment, where they feel secure about moving forward with IP. At the end of the day, we can show them that just like data and bits, watts can be connected, too, and it will produce more productivity and profits for them.

Peter Shaplen: I want to ask you a bit about the Cisco project, as I understand it, to monitor each and every one of the buildings leased or owned outright. You are monitoring the consumption, power usage, for every building, with 80% complete thus far. What have you learned?

Laura Ipsen: We've learned that tracking your carbon footprint is hard unless you IP-enable it. We created an IP-enabled energy dashboard tool, and we're going to give it away to our customers. We're excited about it because it really does prove the model, that if the information's connected, we can manage, monitor, and better utilize energy. It's been recognized as a "best practice" tool by the EPA climate leaders, and it's not -- we believe it's something that more innovation is going to come from it. I think everyone stands to benefit from the tool. It could be a customer that uses it, it could be a school system that uses it, or an individual in a home that might be able to adapt to it, as well.

Peter Shaplen: When you sit with John Chambers and he were to say, "What is it you most want to accomplish from this perch as co-chair of the Eco Board?" what would you answer?

Laura Ipsen: My reason for being on the Eco Board is really to show that we can give back more than we emit. I want Cisco to lead the way to show how if something's connected to the Internet, it can be more green.

While we know that our industry, the information technology industry, represents about 2% of global greenhouse gas emissions today, and it's growing, we believe that our industry can actually give back more than we emit. What we want to achieve is core capabilities that put us clearly into a leadership role in green with our customers.

Peter Shaplen: How do you see that being delivered so that it actually is something people can use, change their behaviors, and ultimately reduce their footprint?

Laura Ipsen: Well, we believe it's going to be used and provided over the network-based solutions, that it's going to be about energy-management dashboards in the home for large enterprises, for entire cities, and for countries, so that whether it's a regulator or an individual citizen or a CEO has better information about their own carbon footprint. So we see this being delivered through networks of networks of data and information all coming together to be a better resource to make decisions. Once you have the information, you can make changes. You can collapse your energy needs to a much smaller footprint.

Peter Shaplen: If we were to return in a year's time, what are one or two things that you would like to see having been accomplished, or at least further down the road toward accomplishment?

Laura Ipsen: I think the most important validator would be through our customers, that our customers would tell us definitively that we took 3% to 5% of their carbon-reduction

goal commitment off the table by using network-based solutions, whether it's in their data center, whether it's through teleworking, TelePresence, and power efficiency, that it was the intelligent network that moves from a always-on world to a always-available world. If we can get that done, I think we can have a sizable impact not just on our own carbon footprint but the carbon footprint of other industries.

Peter Shaplen: Thank you so much. Laura Ipsen is Cisco's Senior Vice President of Global Policy and Government Affairs and Co-Chair of the Company's Eco Board. And thank you for speaking with us.

Laura Ipsen: Thank you, Peter.

Peter Shaplen: And thank you for listening. An archive of this and other podcasts, both audio and video, can be found online at newsroom.cisco.com. I'm Peter Shaplen in San Jose for Cisco.