

People Insights: A Guide to Professional Profiles in Cisco Webex

Cisco® Webex® provides an intelligent and flexible collaboration experience to help organizations foster employee engagement, work smarter and efficiently, and build high-performance teams across boundaries. By continuing to evolve the product portfolio and its features, Cisco aims to improve ease of use and, above all, to deliver additional functionality that further enhances the collaboration experience while improving productivity.

People Insights

People Insights, a new Webex feature, allows you to foster better employee engagement and relationships by providing rich, contextually relevant, and professionally applicable information on the people you interact with throughout the Cisco collaboration suite.

This paper describes:

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The improvement opportunity

Successful collaboration hinges on the quality of relationships. However, building relationships and discovering shared interests or goals takes time. In addition, participants don't always know the people they are communicating with and, as a result, important context is either missing or gathered during the interaction itself. If this discovery never takes place, team synergy, individual engagement and outcomes can suffer.

As the number of people one interacts with grows, users may be unable to put names to faces and may leave an interaction without not knowing who one or more participants was. This is a missed opportunity for all internal and external-facing professionals (executives, sales people, marketers, etc.) whose very effectiveness relies on having quick access to information about the people they are communicating with, whether that's during a meeting, while messaging or calling. As communication is a foundation of collaboration and productivity for all organizations, improving the speed and quality of information about the people you're collaborating with constitutes a broad opportunity for improvement.

People Insights

Functionality

People Insights empowers Webex users to see rich, contextually relevant, professional data on the people with whom they are interacting. Examples of information in People Insights that is gathered from web includes:

- Profile photos
- Biography and work history
- Education
- News articles
- Company information

This data is gathered from public sources and may be further enriched by the organization administrator enabling a corporate directory integration. In this case, People Insights profiles will provide internal data on participants within the same organization, so that participants may easily access data about their colleagues, such as

- Internal title
- Internal contact information
- Reporting structure

Note that for the time being Cisco only supports displaying this data through Webex applications using a Cisco internal API or embedded widget. Cisco will not provide a public API for person or company data.

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Productivity gains

Easy-to-use, readily available access to People Insights profiles makes getting to know the people with whom you are collaborating extremely easy. People Insights is available throughout the collaboration lifecycle, for example:

- Before collaborating: Better understand the roles, responsibilities, and personal history of prospective participants by leveraging People Insights within Webex Teams or Jabber. This results in more effective icebreakers and clearer communication.
- During collaboration: Understand participant roles or interests. This can reduce time spent on introductions, data gathering, ramping up, and following up, which maximizes time spent on productive interaction when in Webex Meetings, Webex Teams or Jabber.
- After collaborating: Better target appropriate follow-up by having the context of who attended the meeting and the roles of the participants.

Once an organization has elected to enable the corporate directory functionality, participants may access data about their colleagues, such as internal titles, internal contact information, and reporting structures. Hence, instead of having to pull up a separate page to look up people in the internal directory to understand where they fit in to the larger organization, the data is readily presented at the click of a button.

Uses of the information may be formal or informal. Formal uses assist in the immediate task, e.g., better understanding of roles, responsibilities and access to a colleagues location and contact information. Informal uses include using serendipitous information such as schools or interests in common to build more personal connections which can be of particular benefit to, for example, a sales associate looking for ways to relate to a potential client. Developing one's personal and professional network is important both within and between organizations. Research indicates that increasing the reach and effectiveness of one's network is a major determinant of personal productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Because data is collected through automated means (see Public Data in Sources below), data is regularly updated to prevent staleness. People Insights shows the latest available information without the user having to update their profile manually. Also, given the nature of the data collection, the profile contents are multi-sourced as opposed to other professional profiles (such as LinkedIn), which are single-sourced and reliant upon user updates.

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Data sources

The People Insights profiles are made up from two primary categories of data: 1) Public data gathered from across the web; and 2) Corporate directory data (i.e. Active Directory).

Public data

Public data is gathered by crawling billions of pages across the web, discovering pages containing professional information, and applying artificial intelligence algorithms to extract, label, and structure that data. All such collected data is run through a clustering process to determine which data points belong together as part of the same person's profile. For example, if there are 10,000 pieces of data labeled 'John Smith,' People Insights algorithms determine which groups of data points belong to an individual, such as "John Smith, the accountant at company XYZ" to create a People Insights profile that is distinct from all of the other John Smiths in the world. Clustered data points are constantly combined, handling any conflicting information, to create our end result—a rich personal and professional overview combining disparate data sources from across the web.

It is important to note that all webpages used for data collection are fully publicly available. No LinkedIn data or any data that sits behind security barriers such as logins or paywalls is used in collating the public data.

When users actively interact with the People Insights feature, for example loading their profile in people.webex.com or viewing People Insights data in Webex Meetings, we initiate a targeted discovery process to specifically enrich their profile and ensure we have discovered and ingested the most up-to-date public sources of data for that user.

Note however, the user must actively interact with their People Insights profile to trigger this process. Merely belonging to an organization in which the feature is enabled or joining a meeting which is equipped with People Insights will not trigger this process.

Corporate directory data

In order to activate People Insights for an organization, customers are required to sync their corporate directory data. When this is done, public and user entered data will integrate with the customer's directory and present an enriched profile that provides both the publicly sourced data and directory information. As noted earlier, if enabled, this functionality allows users to see internal titles, internal contact information, and reporting structures only for colleagues at their own organization. If a user joins a Webex Meeting or is active on Webex Teams but is not part of the organization that has enabled People Insights (i.e. an external user), they will not see any directory data. External users will still be able to see an individual's profile that has been populated with publicly available information or information that the individual has updated on people.webex.com as long as that individual has not hidden their profile.

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Data management

Cisco understands the importance of privacy and security in any product that handles and displays data on people. To that end, we have taken measure to ensure that all data is stored and processed securely. The end user is in complete control of the data that is shown in their profile and they can update or hide their profile information at any time.

Data storage and security

All data, including public and corporate directory data, is encrypted, both in transit and at rest. The public and corporate directory data are stored in separate databases in separate Virtual Private Clouds (VPCs) to ensure that there can be no unintentional overlap or integration of the data sources. Data encryption keys are managed through the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Key Management System (KMS). The KMS configuration is managed by a restricted set of Cisco Webex engineers. The public and private data sources have separate keys to further ensure secure data separation. Data is end-to-end encrypted from server to browser.

Directory data will only be shown to other members of the same organization, maintaining data privacy.

User data encryption

Table 1 outlines sources of user data and user data is encrypted. Table 2 details the retention policy.

Table 1. User data processing and encryption

Data processed by	Type of encryption
Public data	• TLS encryption for transit, AES 256 for storage
Directory data	• Keys managed through AWS KMS
User-generated information	

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Table 2. Retention policy

Type of personal data	Retention period	Criteria for the retention
Publicly available business and professional data	Obtained from public websites - Indefinite	Publicly available business and professional data is derived from public sources. It is retained indefinitely by default. Upon request, publication and links to source data can be suppressed and restricted from processing.
	Obtained through third-party APIs - In accordance with contractual requirements	As publicly available data originates from outside of Cisco, any permanent changes or deletions must be addressed and requested with the primary source. Upon request, Cisco will provide you with details on the primary source.
Directory data	Active subscriptions - At customer's discretion	At the request of users, the data can be archived in order to not appear. This allows for the data to remain permanently hidden rather than re-appearing with a new search after being purged previously.
	Deactivated accounts - Deleted within 30 days	Directory data from People Insights will be hard deleted in the case of deactivation. Administrators can deactivate People Insights by toggling of the People Insights feature from Control Hub. Disabling the Active Directory integration will also result in the deactivation of People Insights. Public, non-directory data will remain in the People Insights database, but the People Insights feature will no longer appear in your Webex applications. Non- directory data will remain, with the exception of name and email for users who had only directory data in their profile before the deactivation.
User-generated information	Active subscriptions - At customer's or user's discretion	Users can delete user-generated information (i.e. edits to their employment information) from their profile at any time. Once deleted it will be fully purged from the system.
	Deactivated accounts - Deleted within 30 days	

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Data editing, updating, and deletion

There are three primary ways in which the data included in a person's profile may be updated:

1. The user updates their own profile. We allow users, once appropriately authenticated, to add, edit or hide fields on their profile via <https://people.webex.com>.
2. The corporate directory data belonging to the company changes. If the directory of an organization changes (for example, an employee leaving, joining, or changing their title), these updates will be sent to Cisco and will in turn change the data in People Insights. Corporate directory data is updated within 48 hours when Active Directory data is updated. Users may not change directory data through this feature.
3. New or updated data is discovered on the public web. On a continuous basis, People Insights APIs explore the public web for new and updated data. For example, if you speak at a conference, your People Insights profile may be updated with the biography and speech posted on the conference website.

While the underlying data sources may change, thereby updating a profile, ultimately, the user has full ability to edit or override public and user entered data. The automatic data updates serve only to ensure we are presenting the most complete and up-to-date profile possible without the users having to continually manually update their profile for any changed information. News data that appears in People Insights is an exception. Users can hide news about themselves from their profile, but the People Insights feature does not allow editing of news. Active Directory data is another exception. Users can not alter Active Directory information like reporting structure or contact information.

In the case of data deletion, since all data displayed appears first in another source, we recommend you also correct data at its source (for example, if you no longer wish to be shown in your company's directory, you must work with your directory administrator on removing that data or hiding it from display). Regarding public data, for example, data that has been obtained from a public source on the web, such as a company team page, users can hide any and all such data.

It is important to note that data is hidden from all view, rather than being purged it from the systems to ensure that if similar data is discovered again, it remains hidden. For example, if you speak at a conference and post a biography, then choose to hide the biography in your People Insights profile, a record is kept of that information so we know to hide if it is found again on another conference page. This ensures data remains hidden more effectively and across a wider range of scenarios. If instead, a user wishes to have current profile data fully deleted from the system, any user may make this request at any time by sending a message to privacy@cisco.com with subject "People Insights deletion request." However, note that having purged the data from the system, it may reappear if discovered again elsewhere on the web.

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Once data is edited or hidden, the changes will be reflected immediately when the profile is next loaded (i.e. by closing then reopening the People Insights card) or by using the refresh button in the top right hand corner of the profile. This is true for yourself and for any other users who may be looking at your information.

In creating these automated systems to discover and assemble person profiles we aim to make your life easier, but not at the expense of your autonomy. Our support team is happy to answer any questions or help with any data requests: simply send an email message to webex-intelligence-feedback@external.cisco.com.

Sample use case: Webex Meetings

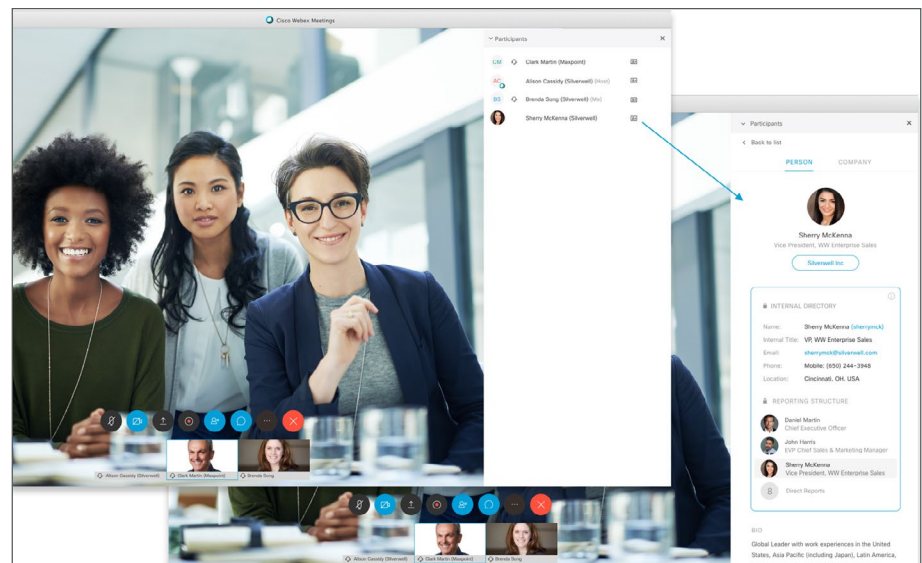
Functionality

Webex Meetings participants may access profile data during their meeting. The People Insights profile helps users know who is currently in the meeting and get to know meeting participants better—not simply the person’s name, but all available, contextually relevant information, who is currently in the meeting, and persons unexpectedly joining a meeting in progress—and not simply the person’s name, but all available, contextually relevant data.

Ease of use

During a meeting, participants will see an icon beside the names of people on the participant list and video thumbnails for whom People Insights has a sufficiently rich profile. (Note, not all participants may have a profile. For example, if they have no publicly available online presence and do not have a title in their organization’s corporate directory, then profile information won’t be shown). If a user clicks on this icon, the target participant’s email address is sent to the People Insights database and used to look up the person’s profile. The sidebar then opens to display the People Insights profile of the selected person as well as the company they belong to (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. People Insights information display of a meeting attendee in Webex Meetings



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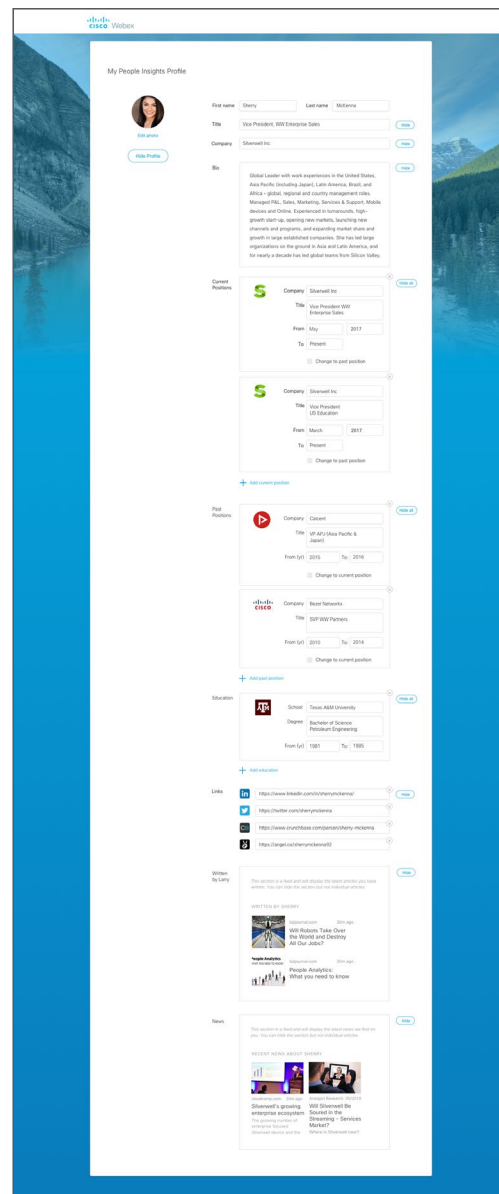
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This readily available access to profiles allows users to see available data on meeting attendees so they can research participants and understand important context during a meeting without ever leaving the flow of the meeting. Furthermore, if someone invites a colleague that you haven't worked with before to an ongoing meeting, that persons information becomes instantly available.

Users have complete control over their profiles. They may access their profiles to edit, update, or delete their information (See figures 2 and 3). More information on how to edit profile information is available in the Data Management section of this white paper.

Figure 2. Editing ability for an individual's People Insights profile. The user controls what gets shared



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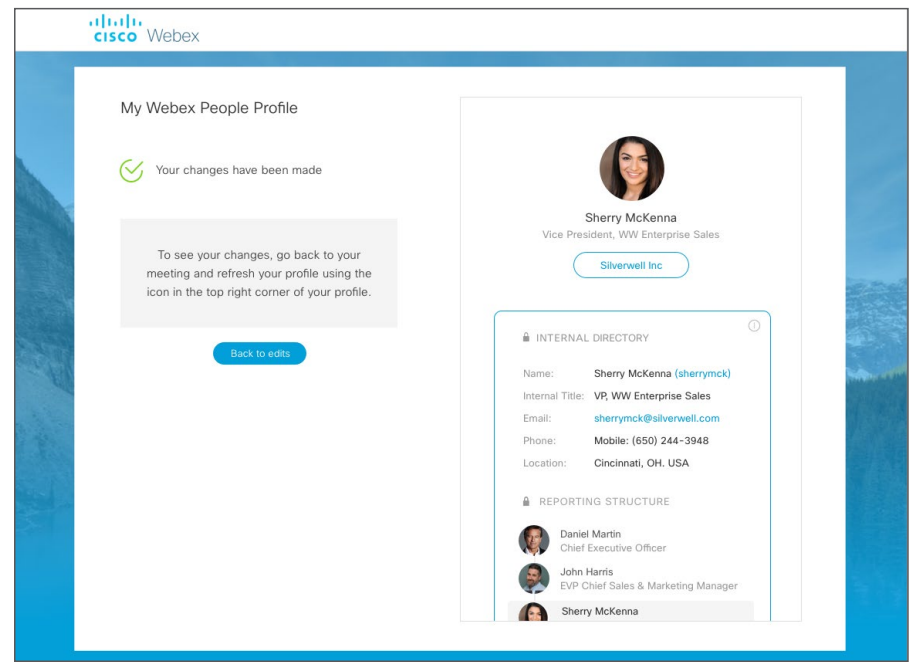
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Figure 3. Example of a user updating their profile information



Conclusion

People Insights represents an easy-to-use feature extension of Webex. The intent of People Insights is to improve collaboration efforts by providing contextual relevant information on people throughout the entire collaboration process which can help users build better relationships and improve outcomes.

Frequently asked questions

What does my organization need to use People Insights? How do I turn on the feature?

The People Insights feature is turned off by default. Currently, there are several requirements to enable it. Customer requirements include:

1. Using Cisco Webex Identity Services (either Cisco Webex Control Hub managed or Site Administrator managed and linked)
2. Enabling a corporate directory synchronization

If these requirements are met, then your site administrator can turn on the feature through enabling both 'People Insights' and 'People Insights - Corporate Directory Sync' via the admin console. Note that we currently require both to be enabled in order to allow access to the feature.

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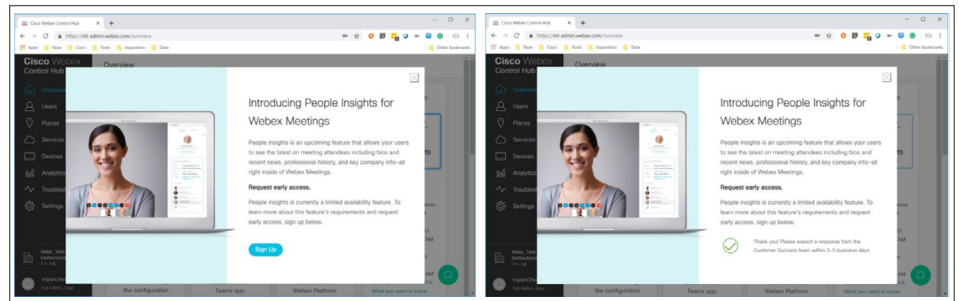
Sample use case: Webex Meetings

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Do you use LinkedIn data?

We do not gather LinkedIn data as part of our data pipeline ingestion system. We have explicitly blocked our discovery mechanisms from obtaining data from LinkedIn.

Which languages and regions do you support?

People Insights is available globally, but English is currently the only supported language. Some data is obtained from other English-speaking nations. We anticipate expanding our non-U.S.-English country coverage in the near future. Support for additional languages is planned.

Can I download my data?

Webex users can download their data upon request. Individuals can receive a copy of their People Insights profile, including their self-generated information by opening a [Cisco Technical Assistance Center \(TAC\)](#) case or by sending an email message to privacy@cisco.com.

How do you respond to law enforcement requests for access to my data?

All law enforcement requests for data access are managed by the Cisco litigation team. Exposure is determined in case-by-case fashion.

Is this feature General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)-compliant?

Yes, People Insights is GDPR compliant. People Insights was designed with data protection and privacy in mind. Content in People Insights is derived from publicly available sources and user- and administrator-provided information. We provide links to the public sources, and offer users a view into their public presence and digital footprint. People Insights also includes functionality to honor data subject rights. As described earlier in this paper, users can easily access their profile and request edits, suppression (i.e., hide and restrict viewing), and deletion of inaccurate or irrelevant information about them.

Also see the Cisco Trust Center for additional information about Cisco [data protection and privacy initiatives](#).

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Where does my data reside geographically?

Data currently resides within the United States. However, with future international deployments, we anticipate storing data within the appropriate local geographic regions.

What control does a company have over company data or users in their organization?

A company can enable or disable People Insights for all users within their organizations. If People Insights is enabled for an organization, the users in your organization have complete control over the public and user-entered data that's shown within People Insights.