

Dear Surge Community,

As we have started to increase activity around Surge planning the last couple months, and after many conversations and feedback from sponsors and past attendees, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the Surge conference for 2017. Given that we have some pretty dedicated fans of Surge, we wanted to give some explanation for the factors we were looking at that made us feel this was ultimately the right decision.

Long time friends of [OmniTI](#) have heard the story of Surge's origins before; as a company that has always been heavily involved in industry conferences, but being primarily east coast based, we had grown tired of always traveling to the west coast in order to network with peers and share what we've learned with others. Further, we've always known there was a wealth of talent on the east coast that could never make those trips to the west coast with us, and we felt they deserved a voice as well. Enter the Surge conference. Initially based out of Baltimore, and then Washington, D.C., we invited folks from both coasts to come east and present on what they had been up to. Friends including John Allspaw, Artur Bergman, Bryan Cantrill, Tom Daly, and others, came together and contributed to one of the best conferences we had ever seen. After a few years we had put Surge firmly on the map as a great conference to attend, and had others putting together east coast strategies.

Fast forward eight years and the conference landscape has changed dramatically. Consider when Surge started, the east coast had never seen a Velocity, AWS Summit, nor QCon. There had been only a handful of DevOpsDays conferences ever, and only one in the U.S. (in Mountain View, as a follow on to Velocity). Contrast that to today; this year we are co-organizers in our third DevOpsDaysDC, and that coming after an awesome first year helping with DevOpsDays Baltimore, not to mention speaking engagements at a half-dozen other DevOpsDays. And that's not the half of it; many companies have embraced the conference hosting idea, with conferences like ChefConf and Chef Community Summit (and of course their corresponding conferences from Puppet, Salt, and Ansible), Google IO, DockerCon, Kubecon; I even heard last year there was a NagiosCon, god help them. And lest we forget the entire Container Summit series or another newer conference series, SRECon, which I spoke at last year, and strikes me as a conference highly aligned with the challenges tackled by Surge since its inception. And this doesn't even cover more developer oriented conferences like Gluecon or Strangeloop; suffice it to say there are now so many conference options it is hard to keep track of them all.

Of course, this changing landscape also leads to an economic reality that we can't escape. The people who run the 1000+ attendee conferences can better attract sponsors looking for a numbers game from attendees for finding new prospects while on the flip side, conferences like DevOpsDays offer a lower price point for attendees. This leaves mid-range conferences like Surge in a difficult position. And the thing is, while I would put Surge up against any conference for value to both attendees and sponsors, at the end of the day you have to compete for that attention, but if we are being honest, we don't want to compete with the folks at O'Reilly, USENIX, or InfoQ, we want to work with them. That is part of why we [speak, sponsor, and help](#)

[organize so many conferences](#) besides our own. I have heard people mistake OmniTI as being in the business of running conferences, but we are and always have been a [technology services business](#). Maybe if we ran Surge differently, made it only about OmniTI speakers and focused everything back on us, it would be different; but then Surge wouldn't be Surge - it would be more a sales pitch than shared discussion, and that is something none of us want.

This isn't to say we aren't bummed; Surge uniquely brought together ideas from engineering, monitoring, organizational study, academia, and a focus on technology as a means to solving business problems - but we will continue to preach this message at the myriad of other conferences we are involved with. As for Surge itself, it is time for a break, a time for us to reflect and decide where we want to take this next; and we would love to hear your thoughts on that.

Until then, we will see you on the conference trail - and we encourage you to stay in touch! To keep up to date on where you can find OmniTI: [subscribe to our newsletter](#), or follow us on [twitter](#), [linkedin](#) and [facebook](#).

Best,
Robert