

Work just got personal with BYOD. By John Bancroft.

Share and share alike?

For many years IT departments have fought to maintain control of the desktop; with a keen focus on balancing access control, information security and usability, but are they losing the fight? There is yet another change afoot, driven by the consumerisation of IT. It's about to get personal!

CHANGING WORKING PATTERNS

Over the past decade we've experienced a steady blurring of boundaries between work and play. Driven by more flexible working, an attempt to achieve that all elusive 'work life balance', but perhaps increasingly the need to maximise every waking hour.

More often than not, work and life appears to be off balance. Today, more people are working longer hours, after hours, weekends, to cope with work demands and perhaps in some cases to keep their jobs. Yet, all this, is only possible through the use of technology.

Increased connectivity and faster broadband speeds have played a significant role, driving cloud computing and the ability to sensibly, securely, gain 24/7 access to remote business information. It has also enabled better

availability of WiFi – facilitating improved mobile computing – with hotspots appearing all over the place. I can check out email and surf the web when on a train into London or while sipping an Americano at my favourite coffee house.

Surely, the IT department must be king? We can now work anywhere, anytime, just as if we were sitting in the office – we must be happy. But it appears not!

REVOLUTION OR EVOLUTION

There is a silent revolution, a groundswell of people using their own technology in work and why not, if it works, and they know how to use it? It is also generally a lower cost to business technology. There is also an element of evolution, with significant advances in mobile computing, the growing number of Web 2.0 technologies that is driving this change.

Regardless of what we think, this new phenomenon is known as BYOD – 'bring your own device' that in turn has led to a number of 'buy your own device' schemes being launched. It certainly seems to be gathering pace with a whole host of companies, including Cisco, Virgin Media Business, Citrix, Procter & Gamble, Kraft Food, Sybase, and Carfax all introducing company schemes.



WHAT ARE THE DRIVERS FOR BYOD?

I asked Tony Grace, chief operating officer at Virgin Media Business, what he considered to be driving BYOD. "First and foremost it's a trend that's being led by the workforce," he explains. "Four out of ten workers in the UK are using their own devices at work – with or without permission. Trying to stamp this out is unlikely to be effective, which is why we're seeing employers take steps to accommodate personal devices."

Whilst researching this phenomenon, I was inundated with statistics from a number of sources that supported Grace's observations. For example, a Europe-wide YouGov survey on behalf of Citrix Online revealed that over 52% of 700 organisations surveyed recognised their employees were already bringing devices to work. The survey also confirmed that the greatest pressure for companies to adopt BYOD schemes, both now and in the future, is driven by staff rather than external factors such as legal, commercial and environmental.

In November 2011 Avanade, a business technology solutions and managed services provider, also carried out extensive research of over 600 senior executives in 17 countries that showed a significant rise in support for BYOD. Over 73% of C-level executives reported that growing the use of employee-owned technology was a top priority, with high adoption rates and 88% believed that employees are already using their own technology at work.

Ian Foddering, CTO Cisco UKI has spotted a shift from companies not engaging BYOD to positively embracing it: "The specific demands of an organisation's industry segment (regulatory demands) and corporate culture (risk tolerance versus innovation) drive BYOD decisions. I think for many organisations today, the BYOD issue is less a matter of 'No, we can't do it' and more a question of 'How do we do it?'"

What positive, responsive actions should we take to manage the mobile device situation in our organisation? I have seen a number of organisations in recent months moving from either blocking or ignoring, to embracing. As a result, these progressive organisations are already beginning to see the business value, ranging from increased productivity to more inclusive and diverse organisation."

CONSUMERISATION OF IT

Where did it all start? "We've seen the line between consumer and business technologies blur over the last few years to the point now where it's virtually gone. Plus, with some employers postponing IT investment due to the

current economic climate, it's easy to see why staff are starting to bring their own pieces of kit into the office. As this trend shows no signs of stopping, it's likely we'll see more employers switching on to the benefits of BYOD schemes in the near future," suggests Tony Grace.

BYOD is the name of the scheme, but this is the outworking of the consumerisation of IT, particularly in regard to mobile devices. CSC's Leading Edge Forum first coined the phrase 'consumerisation of IT' in the early noughties, which describes a trend for new technology that first appears in the consumer market, but then spreads to business organisations. And who can blame us

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wanting only the latest, greatest gadgets to help the work day along!

SATISFACTION, PRODUCTIVITY, COLLABORATION

Despite perceptions that companies and IT leaders are hesitant to embrace the consumerisation of IT, Avanade's global survey found companies are in fact embracing the change, and executives at the highest levels in the organisation are leading the charge. It also found that personal satisfaction at 57%, employee productivity with 53% and access to information at 55% are the top three benefits.

Martin Lunt of KPMG CIO Advisory notes that "companies exploiting the personal investment already made in phones, tablets and, where applicable, laptops, can mean significant cost reductions for large organisations." Yet surely the cost of supporting the devices must far outweigh any benefits? Not necessarily so, he shares some impressive results from a company that had rolled out BYOD and has since seen a reduction of help desk calls by 20 per cent. In the main, this was due to users being much more familiar with their own devices.

He also observes that, "people don't mind carrying their own device with them and, in today's society, are often happy to leverage the five minutes they have spare whilst waiting in a queue to check, and possibly progress, aspects of work.

"The latest smart phones and tablets are slicker and offer greater functionality and employees are therefore more likely to pick up the device and perform more functions."

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MONEY

So, there are some serious cash savings to be made, but that's not what it is all about. The culmination of businesses embracing mobile working, a growing need for collaboration across a more disparate workforce, and flexible working generally are all driving this change. IT infrastructure needs to constantly change and evolve to facilitate how the business users want to work.

Lunt from KPMG agrees: "It has been driven by all of these things, but companies need to embrace it and use it to make improvements in the operational practices of the business. These types of schemes can help to retain staff and attract new people to work for you; particularly graduates and what I call the 'Facebook generation' who are already used to working with this technology.

"With BYOD still in its infancy, a key aspect of implementation is cross-referencing benefits and challenges with operational dynamics – data storage, appetite for risk and security – and configuring a workable offering. Much of this is common sense and, whether labelled Cloud, BYOD, or any other 'buzz' solution, is simply good IT practice," concludes Lunt.

Grace at Virgin Media Business concurs: "Letting staff use personal devices at work isn't just about saving money. It's about finding technology that's better suited to the specific needs of staff members, and will give them the flexibility to work how they want to, wherever they want to. Having everything on one device can also make life a little easier for staff that may be carrying around a work phone and a personal phone, when a single device is capable of doing both jobs."

So, what is Virgin Media's policy on the use of your own device? "Since last July the company has been using a solution that delivers corporate email and calendar functionality in a secure way on iPhones, iPads and Android devices. This enables our staff to carry a single device for personal and business mail. We continually assess our IT to ensure that we're delivering the most cost-effective and enabling tools to our employees," reveals Grace.

WHO DEALS WITH SUPPORT?

When I set out on my journey to discover more about BYOD I thought support would be an issue.





Yet this is being dealt with in different ways that surprisingly reduce the impact on IT.

Foddering at Cisco explains how support and maintenance works for their internal BYOD scheme: "At Cisco we have encouraged and applied a BYOD policy since 2009. Giving employees the freedom to use their personal devices (tablets, smartphones etc) alongside their work devices harnesses the power of accessing information whenever and wherever they want. As a result, we have seen a high adoption of employee funded devices, which are then supported, through an internal wiki, which has driven employee satisfaction while reducing cost to the business, a true example of win/win."

SECURITY, SECURITY, SECURITY

You can't mention technology today without dealing with security. There are already solutions a plenty for securing laptop computers, USB sticks and other removable devices. In fact, BYOD is also partly driving an entire industry around mobile device management (MDM), but that's another story.

"For BYOD the critical thing is to get your security policies correct from the outset. It is only when you start digging deeper you realise how complicated it can get and the security aspects need to be thought through properly. Once you have employee buy in, you can then get them signed up to a new IT policy," advises KPMG's Lunt.

Tony Grace of Virgin Media also points out that one size doesn't fit all: "The fact is that not everyone works in exactly the same way and the same is true for interacting with technology. By working with their employees and their service provider, businesses can ensure the personal devices they see as potential security threats are no longer a risk in the workplace."

SUMMARY

Driven by consumerisation of IT, BYOD is here to stay, in different forms. A number of schemes in place currently are mobile phone specific and are simply facilitating the use of company email on a personal device.

Lunt suggests that BYOD will continue to develop as companies wake up to the possibilities: "Initially it may start with some companies looking at ways to reduce cost. However, as they continue on their journey it leads to other things that are more interesting and beneficial to all, such as collaboration through

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social media, increased productivity, flexible working and even attracting graduates.

"At this point, the cost goes out of the window because there is then recognition of both individual and company benefits. So, we may end up with schemes that enable the person to choose the device, the company owns the device and it then becomes 'our device'."

An increasing number of schemes may spring up around 'our device', and there are whispers of schemes working like the old company car set-ups. In other words, there are a range of devices available and you have to choose and use them the way the company wants you to, but at least you have more choice. These devices are then supported by an external supplier under a mobile device management contract, reducing your risk, but providing you and your employees with the rewards. ■

BELOW FROM TOP

Ian Foddering, CTO CISCO

Tony Grace, COO, Virgin Media

Martin Lunt, KPMG CIO Advisory

