



## Smartphone Invasion! BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) Is Changing How We Work

Matt Rosoff | Jun. 1, 2011, 11:47 AM

<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-workforce-is-going-mobile-heres-what-you-need-to-keep-employees-connected-2011-5>

Mobile workers have been an IT concern for decades -- PDAs, pagers, and notebook computers are not new, and an entire sub-industry has emerged to figure out how to support them.

But the smartphone revolution of the last three years has changed how mobile workers operate. Instead of IT departments being able to force a particular set of mobile solutions on the workforce, employees now expect to be able to use the smartphones -- and increasingly, iPads -- they bought for personal use.

According to data from Aberdeen Group (via ZDNet), about 75% of enterprises now have "bring your own device" policies in place.

This can have huge benefits for productivity as more employees decide to stay connected away from the workplace. It can also lower support costs, as employees log on with relatively simple devices they already know how to use, rather than the more complicated laptop computers that require patching and other maintenance.

Brandon Edling, the director of workplace technology for NBC Interactive, says that the company sends about 70 executives to the National Association of Broadcasters conference every year. This year, they brought iPads instead of notebooks -- and NBC had to send only one IT support person to the conference instead of the usual three or four.

*"The "bring your own device" workforce does require some changes."*

### **Managing devices.**

IT departments need to make sure their management tools can do things like enforce strong passwords and wipe data from lost devices.

In the past, mobile management solutions were most often provided by the mobile device vendor -- RIM's BlackBerry Enterprise Server and Microsoft's management software worked specifically with BlackBerry and Windows Mobile phones, for instance, although both companies are rapidly expanding support for other devices.

But third-party solutions from vendors like Symantec, Zenprise, and Airwatch tend to offer more capabilities -- including the ability to push out apps and updates -- for more different types of devices.

### **Access to apps.**

Big enterprise software vendors like SAP are betting big on mobile access, but it's a work in progress: not all important corporate apps are easily accessible from mobile devices today.

For custom corporate apps, creating a browser-based interface is the easiest solution, but with differing levels of Web standards support in each mobile browser, Web apps may not work the same way on all mobile platforms. That means corporate developers may need to create native clients for the big mobile platforms -- at least iOS and Android.

GE's leader of digital media technologies Dayan Anandappa says the company has spent a lot of time building mobile versions of its internal apps.

For instance, the company built a sophisticated mobile app for searching the corporate directory, locating fellow employee, and scheduling meetings -- the kind of functions that aren't built in to the mail and calendaring apps that ship with iOS and Android. GE also built a mobile interface into its document management system, GE Folders and Libraries, which gives employees the ability to see and edit apps from any device.

One relatively new idea that's gaining traction is an "enterprise app store" -- an internal Web page that offers a single download point for all the corporate apps employees need, as well as a selection of popular third-party apps that have a reasonable work purpose. (No Angry Birds.) San Francisco startup AppCentral specializes in setting up these corporate app stores, focusing on companies with more than 200,000 employees.

Virtualization can also play a key role here -- if apps can't be easily ported to run natively, a solution like Citrix's XenApp and Citrix Receiver can let users access traditional desktop apps (like Microsoft Office) running on a server, rather than having to have a special-purpose native version.

#### **Management practices.**

Reimbursing employees for a portion of their mobile devices and wireless plans is common practice, but companies may also want to consider reimbursing work-related app purchases. Some companies are giving employees gift cards to app stores so they won't have to deal with thousands of tiny transactions on expense reports.

Companies might also have to make changes for legal reasons, like instituting an acceptable use policy and making employees agree that their devices can be wiped at any time for security reasons. For example, Unisys has a bring your own device policy that requires employees to turn over their devices to the company in case of litigation.