

Chapter 6

Embracing “Bring Your Own Device”: Balancing the Risks of Security Breaches with the Benefits of Agile Work Practices

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ABSTRACT

People today have greater access to information than ever previously thought possible, and through the acquisition of knowledge feel, they have more control and certainty in their lives. New usages of IT, the expansion of smart phones and tablets, and the arrival of the Internet generation in the job market now mean that the separation between private life and professional life has become muddled. A challenge for modern organisations is whether to allow employees to use their own devices or attempt to halt this advancing tide. Although there is some disagreement about the drivers and perceived benefits, an increasing number of organisations are beginning to accept the practice of “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD). In view of this emerging trend in the modern workplace, this chapter outlines a number of risk control and mitigation strategies that organisations may consider adopting to address the challenges associated with BYOD that lie ahead.

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INTRODUCTION

Individuals today have greater access to information than ever previously thought possible and through the acquisition of knowledge feel that they have more control and certainty in their lives. The traditional sources of information from the print media to libraries are increasingly becoming secondary as individuals now prefer to access information through their smart phones, laptops or other devices. According to Bambot (2012), individuals are now “clamouring for the convenience of the ‘coolest’ mobility devices in the workplace.” If these devices are not available through the employer, users are demanding that they use their own devices to access company applications and data. This trend of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) has been attributed to the arrival of the so-called “Generation Y” or “Millennial Generation” into the workplace. The challenge facing modern employers is that this new generation of workers “communicate differently, they socialise differently and most importantly they expect to work differently than previous generations... They are used to an age of instant gratification – be it media, music or work” (Deloitte, 2007).

The dilemma for companies is whether to allow employees to access corporate networks using personal devices or to attempt to “stop the steamroller” that is BYOD. New usages of IT and the expansion of smart phones and tablets, coupled with the arrival of the internet generation into the job market, make this challenge unavoidable. The separation between private life and professional life is becoming less and less pronounced. Trying to compel users to work with company computers, inside company offices, on company applications, is likely to cause resentment, dissatisfaction, and non-compliance. Managers are increasingly recognising that BYOD expectations and behaviour are deeply embedded and the challenge is therefore how to authorise the use of personal devices while safeguarding enterprise information security. The objectives of this chapter are to provide manag-

ers with an overview of current trends as regards BYOD, outline the main benefits and risks, and present a number of possible solutions which are further illustrated by means of selected case studies.

BACKGROUND

A recent survey by Avenade (2012) of more than 600 executives, business unit leaders and IT decision-makers across 17 countries examined the extent to which the younger generation of workers are influencing the consumerisation of IT, their brand preferences, and the willingness of business leaders to embrace the BYOD trend. In short, this report dispels the myth that IT professionals and business leaders are resisting the consumerisation of IT and the trend towards acceptance of BYOD. On the contrary, it appears that more and more enterprises are embracing these notions and are incorporating BYOD into their ongoing business practices. The report also illustrates a pervasive shift in the use of consumer technologies in the workplace and significant IT investments being made to manage this trend. Globally, 88% of executives report that employees are using their own personal computing technologies for business purposes today. These findings are consistent with those of a number of other industry reports. A recent international survey of CIOs by Gartner (2013) found that 38% of companies expect to stop providing devices to workers by 2016. The trend is even more pronounced in “high-growth” developing markets (e.g. Brazil, Russia, India, UAE, Malaysia) where 75% of employees use their own device at work, as opposed to about 44% in the more developed nations (Ovum, 2012).

There is a perception in some quarters that companies embrace BYOD policies to accommodate younger employees and attract the best new recruits. However, the findings of the Avenade (2012) report do not support this viewpoint because they found no evidence that allowing

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