EMM or MDM or just remote working?

Many experts in the tech and communications industries believe that 'mobility' is a slightly outdated term. It is based on the mobile phone and particularly on the smartphone with internet access. Yet the true concept is flexible remote working, any time, anywhere on any device. That could span from a home office with powerful workstation and large screens to a smartphone, tablet, a traditional laptop or modern two-in-one combination with both keyboard and touchscreen.

So the particular device is in many ways irrelevant, not least because most workers use two or more every day. Screen of choice for the particular task or situation is usually the prime consideration.

The term Enterprise Mobility Management is the most comprehensive one, in many ways superseding Mobile Device Management. The key point is that any organisation needs some means of controlling and securing the work done by remote access and who has permission to do what. It covers the people, services and processes as well as the key issues of data and access.

Now that there is such a focus on specific apps for the functionality that users need, the specific device is less of a management challenge than the overall extension of all of an enterprise's systems to remote users.

Tara Gale, client solutions manager, Dell EMC Ireland

very security conscious and bound by best practice and compliance regulations. So they can specify their rules and settings while we and our partner can carry that through for them," Young said. "After that, it does not require more than an advanced user to manage it day by day or make changes as the need arises."

A point that came up in most of our interviews was that nowadays potential employees expect all organisations' facilities for mobile, anywhere any time working to be smart. "In my conversations with our clients and prospects every day it comes up," said Tara Gale, client solutions manager in Dell EMC Ireland.

Talent demands mobile

"In attracting and retaining talent, the quality of the technology on offer to staffers is a key element. It is an integral part of the ambience of modern work. You can look on it as part of the consumerisation of commercial IT and the challenges that come with that. But it is a fact of life that user expectations are high, and not just the younger ones," said Gale.

"There is a level of user education involved so that employees understand the rules and good practices and so on. But what they are looking for is a device or devices that enable them to be flexible and productive in doing the job. Any 'on the go pro' needs to be properly equipped for productivity matched with quality of life. That does not always mean the latest high-end kit. A recent client has a field inspection team that spends much time on farms, inspecting things like silage pits. So what they need are ruggedised, waterproof tablets that can be washed."

Another market factor, Gale said, is that office space is expensive and scarce for many businesses. "Plus the fact that the private property market in major cities is expensive, so many people would prefer to live outside and not commute regularly. So business expansion is enabled by mobile and flexible technology solutions."

Interestingly, she said also that Dell EMC has noticed a trend back to small laptops rather than tablets. "Windows notebooks are now available in 360-degree hinged versions as well as the traditional clam shell format – but ultra-thin and with 12-inch high-resolution screens. They are recognised as more powerful and in many ways versatile all-rounders than Android or iOS devices."

COMTRADE'S PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS
KEEPS ASSETS WORKING

Being able to predict when an asset is going to fail and lead to a service or production interruption is the holy grail of operations where predictive analytics can greatly help. Comtrade Digital Services has developed an innovative service – the Comtrade Predictive Maintenance Platform – that helps companies to monitor and actively manage key logistics and other assets, to keep them up and running at all times, and to reduce maintenance costs and be able to better plan maintenance costs.

There are so many patterns and clues that expose the reasons for previous failures and reveal how to avoid them in the future to ensure that vital systems and assets stay up and running all the time.

Much of this capability comes from operating cutting-edge predictive analytics on intelligence derived from Internet of Things and big data. Many businesses are still in development or in the early adoption phases of Internet of Things and big data, and this is a major breakthrough technology in terms of generating a return on investment on these new technologies.

The Comtrade Predictive Maintenance Platform leverages data to enable just-in-time maintenance of critical assets to prevent future failures. It uses predictive analytics software to assess patterns of failures and then determine the processes, assets and equipment most likely to fail and impact on an organisation's ability to run efficiently, and in some cases even operate at all.

Dejan Cusic, business director, Ireland and UK at Comtrade Digital Services, is already seeing a very significant demand – especially among logistics companies – for the Comtrade Predictive Maintenance Platform: "A significant driver of the growth of adoption is the ability to pinpoint likely asset failure. This enables businesses to take an asset out of service and thus reduce the risk of an interruption to a company's production, service or supply chain.

"In logistics and trans-

port industries, for example, smooth, continuous operation is essential. Today, thanks to Internet of Things, these and many other industries are constantly gathering real-time data which is monitoring the performance of many of their assets, regardless of their location. They are getting a very steady stream of rich and accurate information.

"We can use our platform's machine learning and cognitive abilities to read both real-time and existing big data, which is often unused, to help companies to be more forward looking."

The reasons for deploying it are many. First it reduces equipment costs by allowing repairs to be made to equipment prior to failure, thus saving the need for the replacement of an entire piece of equipment. Labour costs are also saved, as scheduled repairs are almost always of shorter duration, less frequent and avoid costly 'critical callouts'.

Production time lost can be a major cost element and

Dejan Cusic, Business Director, Comtrade Digital Services

proactive maintenance ensures that repairs are scheduled to happen in non-productive times. Reduced production time losses also equal increased revenue as customer orders are not delayed or interrupted.

The last benefit is increased safety, as predictive maintenance allows possible problems to be anticipated and fixed, thus creating safer operating and driving conditions.

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