

White Paper

BYOD: The Benefits and The Risks

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SMB and BYOD – The benefits and the risks.

On the surface, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) seems like a no brainer. Your employees can work from virtually anywhere using their own phone, tablet or laptop. They use the equipment they like and can be potentially more productive, and the company saves. Seems like a win-win, right?

Yes. ... And no.

Studies suggest that the BYOD concept is gaining popularity, at least from the employee side of the equation. Young, entrepreneurial or just plain ambitious workers and businesses are often more interested in the concept than their more mature counterparts, although all business types and sizes seem to be grappling with the idea. From the employer's perspective, there can be many hidden costs – from losses due to security breaches (e.g., employee theft of corporate digital property, data sprawl, lost unsecured devices, etc.) to the additional costs of IT support for a wider variety of devices that may or may not work well with others.

Many times, however, what sounds like a good idea to the employee may not have been well thought through. Their own privacy, for example, can be at risk. According to a 2012 **InformationWeek** article, employee privacy rights can be at risk as data is legally “discoverable” in lawsuits against their employers. Companies that retain the ability to remotely wipe devices upon loss or termination of employment can also destroy personal information.

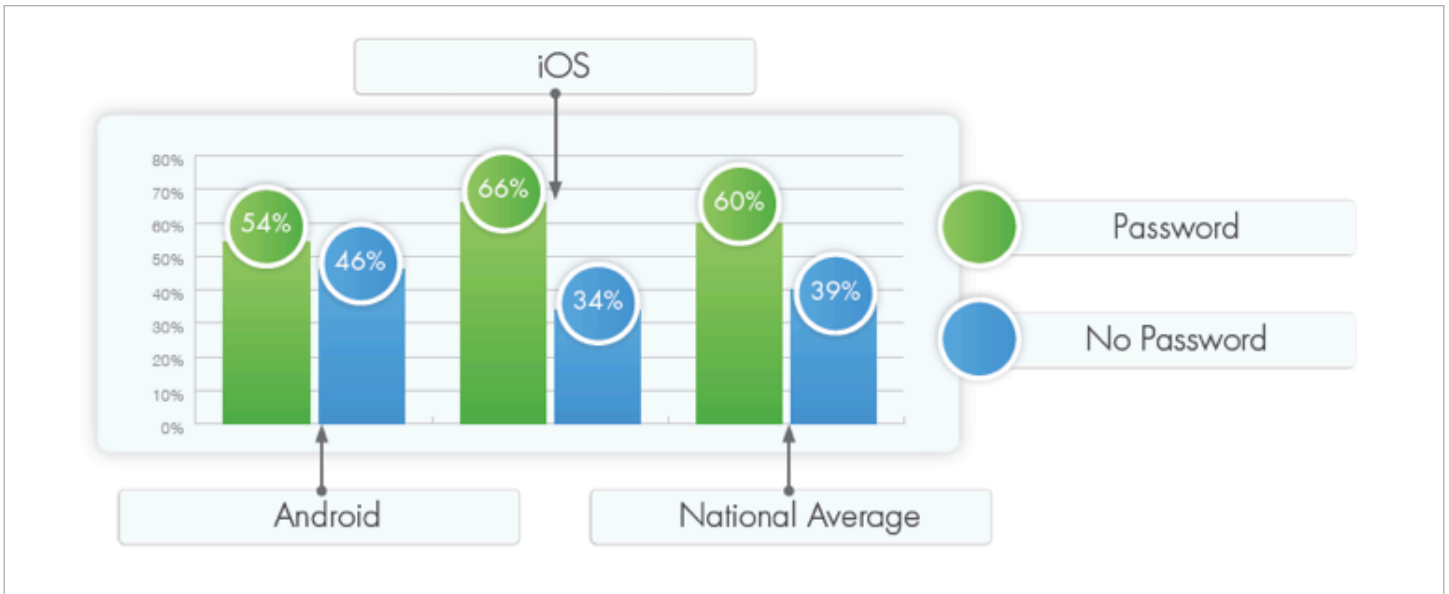
These and other factors are often overlooked, however, in what looks like a relatively simple decision to allow employees to BYOD. However, it may be too late to consider your options.

More American workers “do” than “don’t”.

A study conducted by **Cisco** found that 90% of American workers use their own smartphones for work, yet only 60% password protect them, opening up businesses to potential costly security breaches. We're not just talking hackers, but breaches due to lost phones and tablets as well as when people upgrade their technology and pass their old equipment on to others.

The same study found that most workers were inconsistent about their security, leave their phones without password protection, allow them to be discovered via their Bluetooth technology, or use unsecure wi-fi networks when out of the office.





Source: *BYOD Insights 2013: A Cisco Partner Network Study*, March 2013.

Who pays?

While most companies reimburse their employees for mileage when using personal vehicles, are they reimbursing them for their personal technology use? Should they?

Who's responsible?

In addition to the potential for security problems, who is responsible for the equipment if it is being used for work? Does your IT department have to support their technology issues?

Is it in the policy manual?

Perhaps the better question is, "Do you have a BYOD policy manual?" As the trend toward BYOD continues to expand, companies need to be planning ahead for what appears to be inevitable. Create a policy and make sure your employees know about it and understand it. If you don't have a policy, you can't enforce it.

Best of Both Worlds

While much of the focus has been on the risks of BYOD, the mobility and cost benefits to the enterprise are undeniable. One option many businesses have chosen to employ is Virtual Desktop technology to mitigate their risks while allowing the professional community to bring their device of choice. Virtual Desktop solutions enable corporate IT staffs to package and secure their applications and data within a remote data center environment. The data is then streamed to devices, tablets, and smartphones without having to "live" on the devices themselves. This way, Virtual Desktops keep the data private and secure, regardless of the device or network security, giving companies

greater security while allowing mobile worker to retain access to key information.

Conclusion

Today's smart devices have changed the way we do business. We can get our email virtually anywhere and store documents in the easy-to-reach "cloud." Our company phone numbers find us wherever we may be, making the 24/7 workweek both a reality and a nightmare.

Sometimes, though, technology progresses faster than we can think through all the angles and it isn't until you are face-to-face with a "situation" that you clearly understand the issues. If BYOD is at your reception desk, now is the time to get a handle on it, before it gets a handle on you.

If you are thinking about a Virtual Desktop solution for your business, call Cory Communications today.

About Cory Communications

Cory Communications provides customized telecommunications solutions for businesses large and small throughout South Jersey, Philadelphia and their national and international offices. The company offers a complete range of data and voice telecommunication services, including carrier services, local and long distance telephone services, high-speed Internet, T-1, DSL, VOIP, data communications, audio and web conferencing, and unified communications solutions.



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