

Mac or PC: Employee Choice Is Better for Business

by Steve Hultquist



This article is part of our Employee Choice series, in which we explore the trend and impacts of encouraging workers to choose their own devices and operating systems.

During a company meeting a few years ago when my new role as CIO was announced, one of the first questions from the audience was, "So are we all going to have to use Macs, now?" Even then, my strong preference for using a Mac for my business computing was well known, even though it was not officially supported by the IT department. That support changed when I took on the new role. Of course, I would never dream of forcing anyone to use any particular technology to do their job, recognizing that personal choice leads to higher productivity and lower costs. My response to the question was, "No, but you'll have a choice of computer and operating system to meet your personal preferences and requirements." Within a year, over half of the systems for both technical and business users were Macs.

SUPPORTING MACS IN THE ENTERPRISE

When we speak with organizations about Macs in the enterprise, many support organizations express concerns about them, from questions about device management systems to doubts about enterprise security, it often seems easier to consider Apple products to be consumer-only. However, the data shows something different: allowing the choice of Apple products among a set of approved options actually lowers support costs,

reduces capital costs, and increases productivity significantly for those who choose Macs as their primary systems.

SECURING ENTERPRISE SYSTEMS

Over the past ten years, much of my focus has been in cyber security consulting and products. Interestingly, the majority of security professionals today use Macs due to their Unix-based foundation and the native security of the hardware and software. In fact, during the time of recent widespread malware attacks, in one healthcare organization, more than 80% of Windows machines were affected and 100% had to be isolated until the infection was completely cleaned. Macs were the only systems able to continue operations, and the incident team used them exclusively.

During one of my stints as a CIO, we expanded the organization dramatically. We found increased overall productivity per person with no increase in overall support costs. In fact, we were able to increase the staff by more than 100% while actually reducing overall end-user support costs.



NATIVE SECURITY

In deciding to offer choice to our staff, I took into account the security protections of the platform, including hardware, operating system, and applications, as well as productivity and hardware lifetime cost. In fact, we found native protections provided the majority of necessary security for the platform. For example, macOS has (additional security protections) [<https://www.apple.com/macOS/security/>], protecting the kernel and operating system from attack with runtime protections and application sandboxing. Further, Apple reviews all applications submitted through the App Store as well as provides its Gatekeeper technologies to limit application installations and provide warnings to users as they install non-App Store apps. This extensive set of protections—architected into macOS—provide substantial out-of-the-box protection for Macs in the enterprise.

While we deployed applications, we also learned that beyond the native protections, enterprise

management from third-party enterprise products allowed our IT team to manage systems and information on the Macs in much the same way they are able to manage their other client and server systems.

From using the Apple T2 chip with the Secure Enclave, secure boot, and protection for encrypted storage to TouchID and FileVault 2, the native capabilities of Macs are enterprise-class.

THE CHOICE FOR CHOICE

Through this ongoing series, we will expand on each of these areas to give you more information and understanding as you consider your own plans. The bottom line is that Macs provide not only a viable alternative, but for a significant portion of an organization's staff, they represent an opportunity to save money while increasing productivity, making a choice program worth considering.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Hultquist

*Solutions Architect for Wipro
Wipro's Apple Devices Services group*

Steve works closely with clients and Apple to create effective, productive, and innovative solutions deploying Apple in the enterprise. He has held positions of CIO and CTO for multiple organizations, creating choice programs at each of them. He has also written a CIO column for InfoWorld, been an enterprise management analyst, and a hands-on engineer and executive building networks and connected systems worldwide.

He can be reached at stephen.hultquist@wipro.com.

 apple.experts@wipro.com

 wipro.com/innovation/live-workspace-for-apple

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