ENDPOINT MANAGEMENT IN A MODERN DIGITAL WORKPLACE

Simplify IT support and deliver a consumer-like experience in the enterprise.
A SIMPLER AND SMARTER WAY TO MANAGE WORKPLACE DEVICES

Endpoint management can be defined as a set of tools and techniques that simplify the management of physical and virtual endpoints. The goal of any endpoint management approach is to deliver a consistent employee experience across increasingly diverse device types. To improve security whilst enabling mobility and flexibility and to cater for the many workstyles and apps that make up today’s digital workplace.

Expectations from empowered employees have increased pressure on IT to:

• Replicate an ‘out of the box’ consumer-like experience where users can provision their own devices.
• Improve the experience and consistency across diverse platforms.
• Make it easier to install applications and access business data.

This, combined with the need to consolidate support functions and reduce costs, has resulted in the need to rethink the management of endpoint devices as part of the broader Digital Workplace.

New techniques and capabilities provide compelling new opportunities for managers to manage endpoints. Modern technologies allow organisations to optimise costs, realise benefits and drive innovation in the workplace. Microsoft and VMware are the major players in the modern endpoint management space today and are evolving their solutions to enable IT departments to converge towards a unified suite of tools that will cater for all endpoint devices. This technology has progressively simplified the various components needed to manage and secure endpoint devices; from the device image that caters for multiple hardware profiles, to improving the deployment of regular updates, security patches, and enabling enhanced employee support experiences.

The move to cloud-based applications and storage has allowed data to be decoupled from the device, significantly simplifying how IT leaders approach endpoint management and configuration. Updates can now be deployed as they become available after testing against business-critical applications, keeping the devices up to date, secure and operational. Corporate policy and configuration are also updated regularly, minimising the risk of vulnerabilities and data loss.

THIS PAPER DISCUSSES:

• Why organisations should look to advance their endpoint management as part of a wider workplace strategy.
• How evolving the workplace endpoint management service represents a significant step towards delivering a secure consumer-like experience whilst consolidating support functions.
• What should be considered in a transformation strategy ultimately leading to delivering or consuming Workplace as a Service (WaaS).
The move to a cloud-based and automated endpoint management approach echoes enterprise strategies which have been in existence for some time now. The shift toward subscriptions of Windows 10, Windows as a Service, Office 365 and cloud-based management toolsets have enabled organisations to take a modern approach to endpoint management.

From easier provisioning, simpler updates and granular security, modern endpoint management comprises a range of features that can be leveraged on a standalone or integrated basis for different user groups. By adopting this approach, organisations can take advantage of innovations that deliver consumer-like experiences, consolidate support functions and increase security.

Many of the tools and processes required to move towards a consolidated workplace are already implemented within many organisations. However, the business functions owning parts of the workplace portfolio are often disparate. This causes a disconnect in the user experience available through modern endpoint management.

Organisations have to bring different business lines together in order to define and agree joint outcomes and a consolidated workplace strategy. Once those outcomes and strategies have been defined and agreed, who manages these becomes the discussion. WaaS will be the execution and delivery of these outcomes by a managed service provider.

How does endpoint management contribute to your digital workplace strategy?

Digitise business processes, evolve technologies, and develop services
Deliver a consumer-like experience

In the past, many organisations have struggled to provide their employees with the latest technology releases. Device provisioning was a time consuming and arduous process. Simple, low-cost self-serving provisioning is the cornerstone of a modern approach to managing endpoint devices. User identities and all applications are stored within a secure cloud repository. Users can set up new devices for themselves anywhere, including their homes. It is these modern approaches to device management that underpins the long-anticipated growth of bring your own device (BYOD) solutions (estimated to hit $367 million by 2022). Subject to regulatory obligations, IT teams now can apply company policies to user’s personal devices in a simple and unobtrusive way.

To maximise the effectiveness of a modern endpoint management approach and enable consumer-like benefits organisations should identify the most appropriate candidates based on their workstyles and the devices they are using. Initially, mobile workers are more likely to work from cloud-based apps therefore benefitting from modern endpoint management.

Modern services allow organisations to easily drive adoption of app stores and self-service. Whether organisations have their own enterprise app store or rely on public versions, access to primary business applications and data is key to the continuity of experience and ability to work across multiple platforms. This adoption makes it easier for users to select, install and upgrade applications themselves, as on a personal device, therefore reducing the reliance on IT teams which could cause delay.

Consolidating IT support functions & reducing costs

Part of the shift towards a modern workplace is considering how procuring devices using a device as a service mechanism can reduce both support and device costs. Using lifecycle management processes, users can order, self-provision, self-serve/support and return endpoint devices whilst receiving an enhanced user experience and reducing the burden on IT.

Today, with fewer issues, greater intuitiveness and comprehensive online help, an organisation’s more confident users are likely to self-support in the majority of cases. Many corporate users have come to expect remote support and control. With a modern approach to endpoint management, it’s typical for a service desk operator to take control of a device by remote control when a problem or incident occurs that the user can’t resolve. This inexpensive option is a compelling alternative to a high cost engineer visit.

Security

Providing users with greater freedom whilst minimising security risks is a fundamental component to modern cloud-based approaches. With conditional access policies an administrator can define different restrictions based on conditions such as risk, location and device platform to enhance policy decisions. Organisations can establish granular access policies based on a specific users’ profile. Modern tools allow IT administrators to classify and protect documents, manually or automatically using different rules and parameters. The tools often leverage AI and machine learning in the cloud to proactively reduce security risks. With MDM, lost personal devices can be equipped with self-wiping software. An employee’s lost device can be cleaned of all company data remotely.

Increased automation capabilities and ‘evergreen’ technology updates reduce the risks associated with security vulnerabilities. Now that applications and data are available in the cloud, IT leaders are able to deliver updates faster and with increased agility. Hardware and software can be updated automatically or by the user at a time when it is convenient to them. By leveraging feature release updates from Microsoft and Apple, organisations can adopt an ‘evergreen’ approach to software updates.

SO, WHERE IS THIS HEADING?

IoT, intelligent edge devices, buildings, smart meeting spaces, digital signage...

By preparing to modernise endpoint management now, organisations can equip their IT teams with the tools and services they need to advance the digital workplace. The latest tools can improve user experience (provisioning and set-up), satisfy user demand for greater personalisation of their IT experience, boost security, increase IT efficiency and reduce costs.

Modern diverse ecosystems can’t be managed with a ‘one size fits all approach’. The development of a modern approach provides flexibility over traditional tools which are far more limited. Whilst the ability to achieve these outcomes is a reality today, it is not necessarily something which can just be switched on until existing applications have been modernised. A full switch from traditional device management is dependent on managing a set of user workstyles in the portfolio. A fully modernised endpoint management approach may never be an imperative for some organisations.

If modern endpoint management is the destination, then co-management is the journey. Co-management is a hybrid approach that combines traditional and modern endpoint management tools. It helps organisations embrace the power and flexibility of modern endpoint tools, whilst retaining traditional corporate management for the users, devices and tasks that aren’t yet viable. Traditional management could continue to deliver services in the corporate network; whilst modern tools deliver services out of the network. Workloads can switch seamlessly based on the user’s location, context, workloads and demands.

The latest developments in endpoint management are undoubtedly a positive step forward to provide a more consumer-like experience to corporate users, reduce costs and consolidate support functions. So, the question is, where is this heading?

We are starting to see continuous developments of endpoint management which will extend to more platforms and enhance a WaaS offering and workplace strategy. Future management strategies will broaden to incorporate and leverage the latest technologies and devices.
**IoT**
Management of nonstandard computing devices which connect wirelessly to a network and have the ability to transmit data. If managed effectively can improve levels of convenience, productivity and communication.

**Intelligent Edge**
Connected systems and devices (IoT devices) and systems which gather and analyse information in real time at the site where the data is generated.

**Smart Buildings**
Structures which use automated processes to automatically control a building's functions. This will form a user's physical workplace.

**Smart Meeting Spaces**
Smart meeting rooms and intelligent spaces integrate hardware and software in the room itself. This creates an effective and productive meeting experience whether participants are attending physically or remotely.

**Digital Signage**
Includes technologies such as thin clients that run from resources stored on a central server instead of a localised hard drive, providing a cost-effective cloud computing infrastructure. Smart mirrors use artificial intelligence and augmented reality to create virtual changing rooms.
Management of these additional devices and platforms will allow IT departments to expand their scope of service. Comprehensive ‘out-of-the-box’ cloud management services can be provided for a range of different workplaces such as shops, hospitals, factories and airports.

In summary, the workplace is evolving and with it the way that users and devices are provisioned, supported, serviced and managed. To drive efficiencies within the organisation, disparate business functions need to align and agree on common objectives, responsibilities and outcomes in order to drive a consistent and enhanced user experience.

Shifting the tooling and delivery methods of services allows a more personalised experience, delivering the required service levels based on an understanding of user workstyles and requirements. Understanding how to blend traditional and modern management techniques is key to optimal service delivery.

What’s more, the understanding of end user workstyles will enable persona-based services to drive efficiencies in the lifecycle management of devices. Defining required outcomes as a business allows the shift towards WaaS, taking into account the wide range of endpoints that will form the workplace of the future.
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To find out more about how Computacenter can help your organisation take advantage of endpoint management, contact your Computacenter Account Manager, email enquiries@computacenter.com or call 01707 631000.

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