



The New Reality of Mac in Business

Five things IT leaders should know

With the global success of iPhone and iPad, many businesses are embracing the Apple platform. Along with these mobile devices, sales of Mac computers to business are growing. A decade ago, the Mac was an uncommon sight in many businesses and routinely ignored by corporate IT. Today, more and more business users and IT staff are seeing why the Mac platform is a good fit for their organization.

1. SOFTWARE COMPATIBILITY IS NO LONGER A BARRIER

In the past, software compatibility was a barrier for many businesses exploring the transition from Windows to Apple computers. In the 1990s and early 2000s, vendors often designed business software exclusively for Windows and enjoyed a mostly homogeneous Microsoft ecosystem.

Today, most organizations are moving away from legacy software solutions and embracing cross compatibility. One path to escape legacy lock-in comes with the wave of enterprise-focused SaaS products from Salesforce.com, Oracle, SAP, and others. The future of business software is full of platform-independent software products, delivered via web browser and mobile app.

Apple is a leader in both the mobile device market and web browser technologies (for mobile and desktop). As the interface for business software shifts from OS-dependent desktop software to mobile and web apps, Apple is perfectly positioned to succeed.

2. COSTS ARE COMPARABLE

It's no secret that the average Apple computer is more expensive than the average Windows PC. This is due to Apple's product mix: they only offer high quality products and avoid the low-cost, low-end market entirely. But once you compare a Mac to a PC configured with the same hardware (say a MacBook Pro 13" vs. a Lenovo ThinkPad T440s Ultrabook), the price disparity disappears. For IT buyers, the initial hardware cost is only part of the equation. The good news for IT budgets is that Apple computers are less expensive to maintain (fewer repairs; higher build quality) and they retain their value better over time. Considering the full lifecycle costs, most businesses find no significant cost difference between Mac and Windows PC.

3. MANAGING MACS IS NOW EASY

One big challenge for organizations that are supporting Apple for the first time is finding the right management tools and processes. Two common mistakes are trying to force fit the Mac into a Windows management tool or trying to manage the Mac like an iPad or iPhone with Mobile Device Management (MDM) software. Both are

incomplete solutions and often result in dissatisfaction with the Apple platform.

A better approach is to use management software built for the Apple platform — like Jamf Pro from Jamf. By focusing exclusively on Apple management, Jamf Pro ensures product updates are always aligned with Apple OS releases, to complement and enhance the Apple user experience.

For the vast majority of businesses who use both Mac and Windows PCs, the Jamf Pro integrates with popular Windows management tools like Microsoft SCCM and Symantec Altiris. This offers the ideal combination of purpose-built tools for management with inventory integration for reporting and auditing across platforms.

There's no reason to settle for half-measures or MDM-only management for Mac. Any perceived cost savings in combining Windows and Mac under a single management tool is offset by decreased efficiency, poor user experience, and software update delays.

4. APPLE'S NATIVE SECURITY FEATURES ARE SUPERIOR

Another common mistake for first-time Apple deployments is the unnecessary cost and complexity of third-party disk encryption tools. Why add either to the equation when Apple products are already the most secure in the industry?

The Mac ships with FileVault, a full disk encryption module for data security. When paired with a robust Mac management solution like the Jamf Pro, this provides enterprise-grade data security with no impact to system performance. By contrast, most third-party encryption tools require proprietary server and client software and can fail when the OS is updated.

For malware protection, the Mac includes Gatekeeper, a module to prevent untrusted software from running on the Mac. Gatekeeper uses cryptographic signing and trust certificates, like those used for secure web browsing. The vast majority of third-party Mac software is already signed and Gatekeeper-ready. IT organizations can also sign their own software packages for internal deployment.

Along with FileVault and Gatekeeper, all Apple devices can connect to a corporate VPN for data security in-transit. This combination of native security features, when paired with the Jamf Pro for management and reporting, provides a superior level of security with no disruption to the user and minimal additional effort by IT.

5. NO OTHER USER EXPERIENCE COMPARES

Apple is best known for their legendary product design and user experience. As IT departments begin to support Apple alongside Windows, it's important to keep user experience in mind and strive to meet user expectations. Two factors that will increase user satisfaction for Apple support: update frequency and user autonomy.

Compared to the pace set by Microsoft, Apple's annual OS updates cycle is fast. This can be desirable for users, but a challenge for IT administrators. Even so, the organizations that are most successful with Apple support make these updates available to users quickly after release. To make this possible, it's critical that the management tools are updated to support the new OS. Management solutions like Jamf Pro—focused exclusively on the Apple platform—typically update alongside Apple OS updates within 24 hours of release.

User autonomy is also a difficult goal to achieve for any IT department, but is critical for user satisfaction. JAMF's Jamf Pro gives IT the ability to ensure security and compliance while also enabling user autonomy. With it, organizations get a reliable tool for dynamic inventory, a self-service tool for users, and remediation capabilities all in one scalable solution.



Conclusion

The landscape for Mac in business is dramatically different today than five years ago. At the rate it's going, it's a safe bet that the next five years will bring even more rapid change. This is a positive trend for businesses who want to equip their users with the best possible tools for the job. And, for organizations that use solutions like Jamf Pro, it's a trend that no longer needs to keep IT leaders awake at night.



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