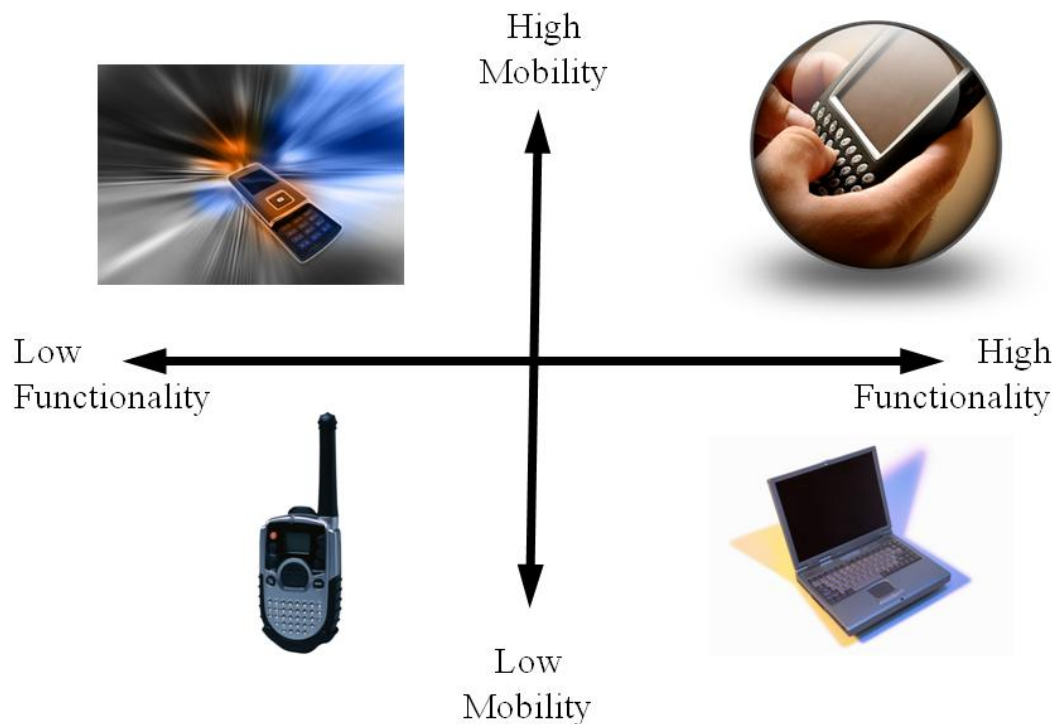


ComputerWeekly – Buyer's Guide to mobile computing

By Rob Bamforth, Principal Analyst, Quocirca Ltd

Enterprise mobile needs



In less than a couple of decades, the mobile phone has moved from a clunky accessory for city types and then for certain self employed groups to a ubiquitous communications tool.

The power of voice communication, information consumption and decision making on the move enables more flexible working patterns and immediacy of response, benefitting individuals and the organisations they work for alike.

Although devices are cheaper and smaller than ever, they are becoming more capable and

'smarter', running applications that would have once required a PC. This requires them to be managed as a full IT client and increased usage of both personal and business applications drives up airtime costs which can escalate while roaming.

Consumer influences are rising and with handsets so easy to buy and use, employees are fully mobile aware so, for business in particular, keeping users happy whilst maintaining control is an issue.

Value (positive)



Industry messaging

- Faster
- Smaller
- Cheaper
- Always connected
- Mobile everywhere



Users

- Control over time
- Flexibility
- Status symbol
- Social connection



Organisation

- Productivity
- Responsiveness
- Flexibility of premises
- 'Free' extended working hours

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In a short space of time, smart mobile devices have changed the way many work.

Executives in instant touch via email, sales people communicating with the office while en route to or returning from appointments and field service workers checking and accessing information to speed the delivery of spare parts.

Rather than limited to a fortunate or powerful few, a huge range of devices and price points have allowed some form of access on the move to become ubiquitous, and relative to more expensive and cumbersome laptops, affordable.

Risk (typically negative)



Technology

- Diversity of platforms means a single 'standard' is unlikely to have universal appeal
- Operating systems keep changing and evolving to out maneuver their competitors
- Flexibility introduces vulnerability with security risks and maintenance issues



Users

- Smartphone use is spreading to a wider range of users - not all are self motivated
- Consumer experience increases wish to 'self choose'
- Consumer mobile applications lead to potential distraction and the need for management control
- Device complexity doesn't match needs of working tasks



Organisation

- Projects often led by technology or desire, rarely based on strategic direction
- Smartphone policies lag behind other mobile devices such as laptops
- Responsibility for smartphones may reside in multiple locations reflecting telephony legacy rather than IT capability

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The appetite for smartphones among mobile employees has grown, partly fuelled by a consumer boom in usage of devices like the iPhone.

No longer the preserve of a handful of ambitious executives or a limited crew of field service engineers, but now the default aspirational mobile device for anyone.

As the numbers and variety of smartphones have soared, their management has become more complex. The consolidation into one or two platforms, hoped for by many IT managers, has not materialised and if anything diversity has increased, making management tasks harder. In many cases users are now wanting to 'self choose' their own preference device type.

As the number of mobile users has grown, so has the diversity of roles and types of workers. Some are focused, careful and self motivated; others are easily distracted, careless and need more management direction.

Keeping corporate assets – devices and information – safe and secure in a mobile smartphone environment is an even greater challenge creating human resources issues as well as technical ones.

Cost (balance negative with positive)



Technology

- Device costs rise as feature lists lengthen
- Ongoing 'As-a-service' pricing replaces fixed costs
- Lower cost smartphones replace laptops



Users

- Airtime costs continue to rise due to increased use
- Social and personal use of business tariffs has become rife
- Satisfaction and motivation rises reducing recruitment and retention costs



Organisation

- Mobile budgets are fragmented and best deals are not easily found
- Integration costs often lags device purchasing
- Flexible working leads to savings made in office costs

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The headline cost of simple mobile devices may have been falling, but new advanced features such as brighter touchscreens, more powerful processors and sophisticated usability features have pushed up the average costs of high end devices.

Added to this, the increasing use of their network connectivity for intensive data as well as telephony functions overall airtime costs have increased. In many organisations these costs may not be visible or aggregated for the business or users, being spread or hidden across diverse cost centres or departments, making actual costs and values difficult to determine. (for further details download Quocirca's report "[Mobile expense management – taking the big picture view](#)")

High levels of user familiarity of the mobile device capability as consumers, coupled with equally high levels of familiarity with the internet, in particular social networking, means that smart mobile devices can easily become a distraction, undermining the expected increases in productivity and flexibility. Both aspects of mobile costs can be controlled, and the first step

for most organisations is to understand what benefits they are trying to gain from the use of mobile technology and ensure that they have a suitable strategy to deliver that, backed up by workable policies.

In doing this, care must be taken not to undermine the goodwill of the employee. Not only do supportive employees look after their mobile devices better, reducing maintenance costs and the risk of loss or theft, they will also be more willing to accept the often unstated productivity bonus of allowing themselves to be contacted while out of the office and out of regular office hours.

The smartphone intertwines the communications requirements of both 'work' and 'life', and both organisations and individuals need to be understanding of the need to balance these fairly.

About Quocirca

Quocirca is a primary research and analysis company specialising in the business impact of information technology and communications (ITC). With world-wide, native language reach, Quocirca provides in-depth insights into the views of buyers and influencers in large, mid-sized and small organisations. Its analyst team is made up of real-world practitioners with first hand experience of ITC delivery who continuously research and track the industry and its real usage in the markets.

Through researching perceptions, Quocirca uncovers the real hurdles to technology adoption – the personal and political aspects of an organisation's environment and the pressures of the need for demonstrable business value in any implementation. This capability to uncover and report back on the end-user perceptions in the market enables Quocirca to advise on the realities of technology adoption, not the promises.

Quocirca research is always pragmatic, business orientated and conducted in the context of the bigger picture. ITC has the ability to transform businesses and the processes that drive them, but often fails to do so. Quocirca's mission is to help organisations improve their success rate in process enablement through better levels of understanding and the adoption of the correct technologies at the correct time.

Quocirca has a pro-active primary research programme, regularly surveying users, purchasers and resellers of ITC products and services on emerging, evolving and maturing technologies. Over time, Quocirca has built a picture of long term investment trends, providing invaluable information for the whole of the ITC community.

Quocirca works with global and local providers of ITC products and services to help them deliver on the promise that ITC holds for business. Quocirca's clients include Oracle, Microsoft, IBM, O2, T-Mobile, HP, Xerox, EMC, Symantec and Cisco, along with other large and medium sized vendors, service providers and more specialist firms.

Details of Quocirca's work and the services it offers can be found at
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