



Keep calm and bring it (your own device) on

An awful lot is being written at present about the growing use of personal wireless devices at work. Widely referred to as BYOD, or the Bring Your Own Device phenomenon, some see it as little more than a fad while others take this trend a lot more seriously. Among them, Gartner which in a recent special report identified the rise of BYOD as “the single most radical shift in the economics of client computing since PCs invaded the workplace.” More than that, Gartner argues that every business should have a clearly articulated policy on BYOD, even if that policy is to ban it altogether.

Given the forcefulness of statements from Gartner and other industry analysts it is, perhaps, unsurprising to find IT vendors of all kinds lining up to market their particular products and services as key to winning the “battle of the BYOD”. Indeed, every man and his dog, it seems has a whitepaper, analysis or strategy to offer which, inevitably, will provide the definitive answer to all BYOD ills.

Naturally, as a global developer of digital networking solutions, D-Link too has an opinion, although the D-Link position on BYOD may be a little different from that of some of its competitors.

The same but different

A key observation here is that BYOD hasn’t just appeared overnight. Yes, the type of device users want to connect to the LAN is changing and changing rapidly - from mostly notebook computers to a mix that includes tablet computers and smartphones - but that isn’t hugely significant. Businesses have been faced with policing ad-hoc wireless connectivity for a number of years and, as such, the majority will have policies when it comes to who and what they will allow past the corporate firewall, and mechanisms in place to enforce them.

As Neil Patel, Director of Business Solutions at D-Link Europe, explains those policies and mechanisms should be robust enough to work regardless of the device involved.

“Whether it’s a WiFi notebook, an iPad or Android smartphone, no self-respecting CIO is going to allow unfettered access to the corporate LAN. They will either block all unknown devices or limit access using technologies and tools that are both widely available and, in most cases, deployed already.”

The (D-Link) tools for the job

They may be growing in number, but smartphones and tablets are far from invisible. They all have a MAC address and get assigned an IP address when they connect over WiFi. As such they can be identified and managed, just like any other network device, using tools available already in D-Link products.

Tools such as the ability to segment the network using Virtual LAN (VLAN) technology, for example, and direct any potentially insecure devices to a quarantined guest network where all they can do is connect to the Internet. There's no magic involved, "foreign" devices are easy to spot, while for those wanting more granular control, users can be required to authenticate themselves to, for example, gain access to email and other business applications over the LAN.

Support for tools such as these has long been built into the D-Link range of Ethernet switches, routers and wireless access points. Moreover, D-Link is a pioneer of managed wireless networking and, with its market-leading Unified Wireless portfolio, enables access controls to be managed centrally and applied universally across all points of entry to the corporate network, wired or wireless.

Close integration to the NetDefend family of firewalls and other security appliances further enhances the D-link solution as do its IP surveillance and network storage lines. The company also has its own D-View Network Management software which can provide a single pane of management for all devices on the network.

Additionally a commitment to industry standards insures that BYOD and other management tools found on D-Link products can co-exist and work with those on products from competitors in a mixed networking infrastructure.

More to come

Finally it is important to stress that although D-Link is already delivering the tools and technologies needed to support an effective BYOD policy, it is far from resting on its laurels. Far from it, D-Link is actively embracing the mobile working revolution with products and services designed to make it easier for smartphone, tablet and notebook users to both stay connected and work together collaboratively.

In particular, D-Link is streets ahead of the competition when it comes to the use of the Cloud through its innovative mydlink™ private cloud service. Increasingly incorporated into D-Link routers, network cameras and storage products, mydlink™ empowers small businesses to both manage their devices remotely and for users to access them wherever they happen to be.

Neither is D-Link looking to downplay the need for companies to formulate and enforce a clear policy on BYOD, or the need for robust access controls. At the same time, however, it doesn't see the rise of the personal mobile device as something to get overly worked up about. Instead, companies should keep calm and carry on as the tools required to manage the BYOD trend are there already.



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