Hardware Trends That Help Modern Workflow

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THE ENTERPRISE CONTINUES to be transformed by the changing workforce, their expectation that the method of exchanging information in a business environment needs to be as convenient as it is on their personal devices, and the sheer pace of technological change. In particular, employees who have grown up with Web 2.0, the growth of cloud-based services, advances in smart devices and increased applications for artificial intelligence are laying the foundation for the next generation of enterprise IT. The foundational changes wrought by these movements demand that enterprises adapt and respond to avoid being left behind with an outdated, legacy-laden IT architecture.

With that urgency in mind, here are some of the top trends that will likely impact the enterprise in 2017 and beyond:

The Millennial Impact on Enterprise IT: I Want It My Way

Much has been written about the millennial generation's impact on the workforce, but their influence is still acutely impacting the evolution of enterprise IT and will continue to do so for the next 10 to 15 years as Generation Z follows suit. These digital natives have only known a world where their personal technology is flexible, customizable and accessible anywhere at any given time, and they have come to expect that their work devices bring the same capabilities. This has been termed the "consumerization of IT," and enterprises cannot afford to ignore this fundamental preference of what is now the largest portion of the workforce.

For the dealer, however, this change represents an opportunity to help enterprises bring change to bear, by matching employee preferences with necessary access

controls. This calls for more flexible solutions, as noted by members of the dealer community. Dale Dupree, vice president of sales for North American Office Solutions, has seen a larger demand for customized solutions that emphasize flexibility, and expects that 2017 will see even more demand for IT flexibility, customization and convenience in the workplace. He says that providing a virtually seamless experience is critical to achieving the ROI that enterprises expect.

This is where simplicity and smart design can make a real difference. For instance, a multifunction system that offers an easy-to-use authentication feature allows the system to know who the user is. It can then serve up a customized interface based on the user's specific setup while helping the enterprise maintain the desired level of access restriction and usage control their IT and security policies demand.

Predictive Analytics and IoT Driving Reliability

Another 2017 trend, the internet of things (IoT), has allowed the rise of predictive analytics that can help in maintaining device fleets, which can lead to greater hardware availability. Many of today's devices have the ability to leverage hundreds of sensors that live inside the devices to provide diagnostic services. This technology provides status information that can then be captured and communicated to technology service providers, helping to more effectively diagnose the health of a given device.

While printer manufacturers have been leveraging data captured from deployed devices for many years, the big change is moving from a proactive approach: proactively monitoring and knowing what has happened, then acting more

quickly to resolve a problem — to a predictive approach: predicting what will happen and taking care of something before it rises to the level of a problem visible to the user or customer. Using artificial intelligence (AI) to conduct big data analysis, moving to a predictive service model becomes possible. AI has become a key technology to accurately predict potential device failures, helping to alleviate problems prior to them occurring.

It is important for enterprises to maximize available technology. Today's hardware technologies are critical components to important enterprise workflows. If a device is not available, workflows can stop and that can mean business stops.

Advancing Fleet Consistency to Maximize Efficiency

An organization's productivity is measured in each individual user. When it comes to hardware solutions, businesses should strive for a personal and consistent user experience to help them achieve maximum efficiency, which can result in efficiency for the dealer as well. This is particularly important in settings where employees are moving between multiple devices. In such instances, having similar interfaces gives the employee a familiar experience and can allow them to work more productively.

Getting Serious About Document Management

With security and compliance being top priorities for organizations across all industries, there is a critical need to implement security features on multifunction printers. According to a 2016 ISACA survey, 82 percent of cybersecurity and information security professionals report that their enterprise board of directors is "concerned" or "very concerned" about cybersecurity.

For managers, the challenge in operating within a secure environment is balancing security with usability.

A comprehensive document management approach that incorporates the latest technology solutions is an essential step to achieving enterprise security and compliance goals. Depending on the size of the company, however, this can be an unwieldy process. Moreover, when first starting out, the process for document management is often created ad-hoc based on immediate needs without consideration for the bigger picture.

While purchasing the latest equipment and updating outdated software are the foundational requirements for firms, partnering with a vendor can also help navigate security and usability concerns — for instance, by helping administrators put features in place to help restrict access to sensitive client data, and providing them with the tools to monitor, manage and control document processes on multifunction devices. This includes the ability to archive images of copies, prints, faxes and scans, flag key words, track activity by user and even provide a content audit trail in certain instances.

Fast moving trends and these latest innovations are placing considerable pressure on enterprises to keep up. But opportunity abounds for those who embrace the challenges of change and adopt new capabilities in a way that makes sense for their operations. ⓘ

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