



IDC ANALYST CONNECTION



Linn Huang
Research Director

Key Questions to Ask About Your Fleet During Your Windows 10 Migration

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Migrating to Windows 10 has been a prominent concern for corporate IT over the past couple of years. With Microsoft ending support of Windows 7 in January 2020, completing that migration will be critical in the coming years. Urgent as this migration may be, forward-thinking organizations are also using it as an opportunity to reassess how their old device strategies fit organizationally — especially in terms of supporting a modern workforce. Consequently, the benefit of Windows 10 to a company is fully realized only when it's running on new PCs.

The following questions were posed by Intel to Linn Huang, IDC research director, on behalf of Intel's customers.

Q. What critical decisions need to be made when deploying Windows 10?

A. With Windows 10, Microsoft aimed to address some key pain points for IT and end users in a modern world. An intensifying challenge for corporate IT has been managing and securing an increasingly complex, multidevice, multiplatform infrastructure. New security features help harden the perimeter wall, and Microsoft has designed Windows 10 to neatly integrate into unified endpoint management solutions.

Yet only on new hardware are the full benefits of Windows 10 realized for IT and its users. Many of the new security and manageability features, such as Windows Hello and enterprise mobility management integration, are either enabled or optimized on newer hardware. For example, Intel Authenticate can help IT buyers coalesce their story around multifactor authentication, utilizing biometric feedback, other devices, and/or geolocation to ensure users are who they say they are.

Newer hardware should also provide a major boost to employee utility. All-day battery life and thin and light form factors should resonate strongly with today's workers, who typically spend more time on the go than at a desk. Even companies with primarily deskbound users could benefit from thinking about new devices. The one-size-fits-all PC strategy of yesteryear continues to bend as digital natives increasingly populate the modern workforce, bringing their own computing behaviors and preferences. With notebooks getting aggressively thinner and lighter each generation, and with 2-in-1s increasing in popularity, refreshing a fleet is the best way a company can leverage its Windows 10 migration to catch up to a modern workforce that is better secured and easier to manage.

Q. What's the business impact of an aging PC installed base?

- A. Old PCs can be bad for business on a number of fronts. Companies that don't keep to a regular refresh cadence or have postponed a refresh in the past few years are exposing themselves to external and internal threats.

Newer hardware typically packs more advanced security features than hardware even a couple of years old. PC makers and component suppliers continue to focus a significant portion of their innovation efforts on security in response to black hat actors that are becoming increasingly sophisticated and emboldened. Regularly refreshing new hardware can help organizations stay ahead of external threats.

Older PCs can also accrue more costs in yearly maintenance, repair, and downtime. In a 2016 IDC survey of U.S. IT decision makers, organizations claimed that PCs older than four years cost 37% more annually to maintain than their younger counterparts.

Allowing a PC installed base to age could also be sapping employee productivity, stoking user dissatisfaction, and communicating the wrong message about technological aptitude to both employees and customers. Modern workers will increasingly demand modern devices. Organizations that resist this push are likely constraining employee utility.

Q. How can new PCs help address increased security requirements?

- A. Simple password log-in has become antiquated, though it is still prevalent. Nevertheless, such password protection is simply no longer good enough as part of a company's cybersecurity chain. With stakes climbing ever higher in terms of a security breach, companies need to be thinking about new and multifactor authentication.

Device and component makers are focusing on biometric and multifactor authentication to help fortify the endpoint by replacing or supplementing the old password log-in. As table stakes for the rise of cybersecurity, technology vendors continue to drive innovation from the services sector down to the silicon. Building a hardened and comprehensive security strategy around endpoints should start at the processor.

New security features of Windows 10 are optimized and enabled on newer PCs. Hardware-enhanced security that starts at the processor level allows users to conveniently utilize facial recognition, fingerprint, geolocation, and/or another paired device to log in while simultaneously allowing IT to simplify asset and security management. Consequently, deploying Windows 10 on a new PC to employees can help protect against external threats to the device and help safeguard company files and data in the event a breach does occur.

Q. How can new PCs address workplace changes and employee needs?

- A. A modern workplace takes into account the modern workforce. Today's workforce is increasingly populated by digital natives who bring their own compute preferences to their first day of work. Equipping them with modern devices can help drive true workplace transformation.

Thin and light notebooks should appeal to the corridor crowd — employees who spend more time in communal areas than at a desk. Convertibles and detachables should resonate with road warriors who find working on a long flight onerous. An increasingly on-the-go, "work anytime, anywhere" workforce benefits from longer battery lives seen in newer notebooks.

With a myriad of newer technologies — including USB-C, touch, and advanced panel resolutions — on the market, even deskbound employees could gain in the productivity and

satisfaction departments with newer PCs. The modern workforce must be powered with modern devices or face constrained worker utility.

Further, this workforce must still be managed by IT in terms of assets and workspaces, and manageability will become an increasingly challenging task as the corporate environment grows in complexity. Changes in business models, such as device as a service, could provide relief in the future. However, manageability still starts with proven, trusted, and stable platforms.

Q. How can new PCs help IT?

- A. Newer PCs help ensure greater security along the company's digital perimeter and are easier to manage more robustly — two leading challenges for traditional device strategies. Refreshing to new PCs should also help keep device costs down by ensuring greater platform stability and reducing annual costs associated with maintenance, repair, and downtime.

New security and manageability features of Windows 10 can help any company with its workplace transformation by bringing its users into the world of modern apps running on modern OSs powered by modern devices. Refreshing the fleet with the latest devices in conjunction with migrating to Windows 10 is the best way for organizations to ensure the security of and manage the modern workforce.

ABOUT THIS ANALYST

Linn Huang tracks market trends and industry developments that impact the worldwide and U.S. markets for PCs, thin clients, and monitors. He participates in cross-research streams that cover all device categories.

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Global Headquarters: 5 Speen Street Framingham, MA 01701 USA P.508.872.8200 F.508.935.4015 www.idc.com