Welcome to a world where work gets done and people connect using sleek software programs on smartphones and tablets.

Executive Summary

It can be argued that software drives innovation and behavior. And nowhere is that more apparent than in the burgeoning market for mobile applications — software that runs on portable computing devices, such as smartphones and tablets.

Mobile apps drive device use. And as mobile networks grow more robust, they let users tap into the Internet that they already know well to get information, communicate with colleagues and friends, be productive and — ultimately — buy things.

Today’s mobile apps turn handheld devices into e-book readers, portable navigation systems, digital wallets and more. And for organizations with mobile workers, they boost productivity by allowing easy access to resources and applications.

Mobile apps can be designed for employees, customers, constituents and more. They can be offered in established commercial app stores or via enterprise application storefronts managed by IT. And they require time and effort to develop and manage. Still, organizations can’t afford not to explore strategies for employing mobile apps to their advantage.

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With Mobility Comes Mobile Apps

According to market research firm eMarketer, there will be 156 mobile Internet users in the U.S. by 2015, up from 114 million in 2012. More than half (58 percent) of U.S. mobile phone users will have mobile Internet access in 2015, up from 44 percent in 2012.

When it comes to the enterprise, Yankee Group estimated there were more than 60 million mobile workers in the U.S. in 2011, which was about 38 percent of the total workforce. Those workers, increasingly, are bringing their own smartphones and tablets to the workplace — often with their organization’s blessing — in what’s known in IT circles as bring-your-own-device (BYOD) initiatives.

All of these mobile users — whether moving among cafes or cubicles — interface with their devices through software. And the best software is tailored to work on mobile devices.

Mobile applications have become one of the biggest opportunities in IT. Whether downloaded from a website, such as Apple’s App Store, or deployed and managed by an organization’s IT staff, mobile apps engage users, drive commercial sales, reinforce brand messages and make mobile workers more productive.

- Research firm IDC expects 76.9 billion mobile app downloads worldwide in 2014.
- Depending on age, mobile users keep anywhere from a dozen to two dozen apps on their devices at one time.
- By Google’s own estimates, 95 percent of smartphone users in the U.S. use search engines on their phones; 92 percent seek local information; and 89 percent take action based on what they find.
- InMobi, which operates an independent mobile ad network, says that in the fourth quarter of 2011, there were 44.5 billion available ad impressions on mobile devices in North America — a 67 percent increase over the third quarter of 2011.
- Research firm eMarketer predicts that in 2012, 29 million mobile phone users will redeem a coupon or code they received on their phones; 36 million will do so in 2013.

If all these numbers sound impressive, they’re even more so overseas. In general — in Asia, in particular — smartphone and mobile app adoption is even greater than in North America. Therefore, organizations and businesses that operate globally have an opportunity to reach a much larger audience.

Analysts agree that this is just the beginning. Mobile app usage is expected to be even more pervasive in the future, enabling what is known as mobile commerce, or m-commerce, in which consumers use their smartphones and tablets to conduct transactions and make purchases anywhere — both online and by interfacing wirelessly with the physical world.

The driving force behind mobile app development is the powerful lure of reaching people (customers, constituents, employees, colleagues) where they are at any moment. Increasingly, they are not tethered to a desktop PC.

It would be easy to assume that, thanks to greater wireless network bandwidth, mobile users can communicate and consume digital content on their mobile devices the same way they can on a desktop PC — through a web browser. But the hardware platforms are not the same. Mobile apps, tailored to small–form–factor devices, engage users better because they are intuitive and designed to perform optimally on a small screen.

Why Mobile Apps Enhance Productivity

With smartphone and tablet adoption what they are, no organization can afford to ignore the opportunity that mobile apps present. The current generation of mobile devices, combined with 3G and 4G wireless networks, has made on-the-go, high-speed Internet communications viable, giving individuals and organizations alike true anytime, anywhere access to data, entertainment, applications and more.

Mobility completely changes the way organizations interact with their constituents, users and customers — and with one another — because it creates untethered consumers, clients, colleagues and partners. Personal computers and the Internet may have promised 24x7 commerce or service, but only when organizations can reach people when they are away from their PCs — in coffee shops, at airports, at sporting events, in public parks, on the sidewalk — can there be true 24x7 interactions. And mobile apps are the portals to enabling productivity on the go.

Using smartphones and mobile apps:
- Users are free of the constraints of traditional broadcast or online communication.
- Users, customers, prospects and partners can search for information anytime, anywhere.
- Users, customers, prospects and partners can share information in real time.
- Users, customers, prospects and partners can make purchases whenever and wherever the mood strikes.
- Employees can access an organization’s apps and resources anywhere, boosting productivity.

For instance, imagine a mobile sales force that doesn’t require a wired network connection to access interactive catalogs, billing systems and customer relationship management (CRM) databases. Not hard, right? Now imagine a mobile sales force that doesn’t even need a Wi-Fi connection to access those resources.
Mobile apps, running on today’s generation of wireless devices, enable unprecedented access to the tools that allow salespeople to sell more, consumers to buy more, and everyone to enjoy the possibilities of the Internet – wherever they happen to be.

In a recent survey of organizations exploring greater mobility for their employees, Yankee Group found that the top reason for investing in mobility solutions was to improve responsiveness to customers. Other reasons include giving people access to existing applications to improve productivity, transforming work processes to improve efficiency, enhancing employees’ work–life balance and fostering better collaboration — among customers, constituents and partners, as well as among coworkers.

And for small- to medium-sized businesses (SMBs), which often rely on remote workers, mobile apps can be a critical competitive advantage. In a 2011 survey, AT&T found that 72 percent of small businesses were using mobile apps. Nearly 40 percent said they couldn’t operate without mobile apps. (Interestingly, it’s estimated that an overwhelming majority – 78 percent – of the U.S. companies that actually develop and sell mobile apps are small businesses, according to the Association for Competitive Technology.)

But appreciating the possibilities of mobile apps and planning for their deployment are two different things. Assuming an organization feels prepared to embrace a mobile apps strategy, it still has decisions to make.

### Mobile Apps versus Mobile Web

When organizations decide they want to carve out space on mobile devices, their options fall into two general categories: native mobile apps that are developed for use on a particular platform or device and cross–platform, mobile websites, which are optimized for portable devices and run in a mobile browser. (Note, hybrid apps, offering cross–platform compatibility, and dedicated web apps, tailored to a specific platform or form factor, are other options.)

Mobile apps versus mobile web is not necessarily an either/or proposition — each has its strong suit, and offering both increases the number of ways in which users can interact with an organization. It’s important to research how the organization’s intended audience engages with the type of mobile application it is considering (informational or commercial, for instance), including what mobile platforms they typically use.

For consumer–facing apps, organizations may determine that the more options for reaching customers the better. At the same time, business–facing apps may rely on one model of mobile app or the other (native app versus website) to simplify the user experience and IT management.

Native mobile apps are distinguishable by several key characteristics:

- **High–performance:** Native apps can run seamlessly on a smartphone or tablet, in some cases even when the smartphone is not connected to a network. They are not as dependent on the speed of a network connection to display content.

- **Customizable:** Native mobile apps can be branded for marketing purposes by developers or personalized by users depending on their location or the types of content they prefer.

- **Feature–rich:** Mobile apps that run directly on devices can be written to take advantage of those devices’ built–in features, such as cameras, GPS radios and wireless connections, including emerging near–field communication.

- **Graphically sophisticated:** Because they run natively on a device’s processor, mobile apps can incorporate more sophisticated graphics and video.

That said, there are some challenges to running apps natively on mobile devices. For one thing, apps must be downloaded, which in itself isn’t an issue, but ensuring that people can find an organization’s app among the growing number of app stores and other delivery mechanisms takes planning and, in some cases, marketing support.

In addition, native apps must be developed, sometimes more than once, so that they will run on a variety of devices. And depending on where an organization wants to offer its apps, such as Apple’s App Store, they may need to go through an approval process.

Mobile apps, because of their tight integration with the devices they run on, are often the optimal solution for reaching customers or colleagues on their mobile devices. However, mobile websites offer certain benefits and have key characteristics of their own:

- **Wide–reaching:** Although performance depends on connectivity, any web–enabled phone can access mobile–optimized sites; they are not tied to one type of smartphone, for instance.
The Case for Mobile Apps

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10 Mobile Apps for 2012

As mobile devices become more powerful, the apps they run grow more sophisticated. Here are some of the most compelling areas of mobile app development:

1. Location-based services: delivering features and functionality based on where the user is
2. Social networking: the fastest-growing mobile app category
3. Search: increasingly integrated with the ability to take action from search results
4. Commerce: possibly including new mobile functions, such as “checking in” at a store
5. Payment: enabled by emerging near-field communication
6. Context-aware service: better user experiences by factoring in information about interests and preferences
7. Object recognition: using a device’s cameras and advanced sensors to create new apps
8. Instant messaging: a first step toward unified communications on mobile devices
9. E-mail: a top app category, with 713 million users anticipated by 2014
10. Video: driven by tablets and smartphones with larger screens

Source: 10 Consumer Mobile Applications to Watch in 2012, Gartner, February 2011

• Dynamic: Mobile sites reflect the latest content the organization has published, so they’re usually as up-to-date as possible.
• Discoverable: Consumers are more likely to find mobile sites in their Google searches and other online explorations than they are to stumble across mobile apps.
• Deployable: In general, taking an existing website and altering it to run in a mobile browser is less work than developing a new mobile app. Organizations must also look at their hosting platform to ensure that it can detect what type of computing device is accessing the site, and that it can serve a compatible mobile version.

Mobile websites are often considered a steppingstone to native mobile apps. They usually can’t function offline the way some mobile apps can. They can’t always take advantage of a device’s hardware features. (Though that is changing; for example, some mobile sites can take advantage of multitouch screens.) And ultimately, mobile sites are highly dependent on network performance, not only for communication but also for user experience.

That said, for organizations just launching a mobile strategy to reach smartphone and tablet users, a mobile-optimized website is often the best place to start. Moreover, mobile websites have begun to evolve into more full-featured web-based apps, thanks in part to momentum behind the HTML5 development framework and other technologies. And over time, web-based mobile apps are expected to overcome some of their current limitations, such as the ability to perform some functions in an offline mode.

Types of Mobile Apps

Mobile apps that run on portable devices are as varied as they are plentiful. Some are entertaining, others informational. And still others — m-commerce apps — are transactional.

Mobile apps can be defined by the markets they serve, the devices they run on, how much they cost (free or not) and the ways in which they’re deployed. Some are pre-built, out-of-the-box solutions (think e-mail and productivity apps); others are custom-built (tailored to organization-specific data stores or work processes). Others, spanning all types of use cases, are based on templates, which can be quick to deploy and easy to customize.

For our purposes, and for organizations just getting started, mobile apps can be divided into two broad categories: customer-facing apps and business-facing apps. The difference between the two is the intended audience.

Customer-facing apps: These apps are often publicly available. They’re the kind of apps most people think of when they think of downloading an app, whether it’s a game, information source or productivity app. Many are free; others are available for a small fee, depending on the organization’s strategy. Still others are designed to offer some free features while enticing users to pay for additional “premium” features and functionality.

Customer-facing apps can help organizations:
• Open another sales channel for their products and services
• Market themselves and their offerings in unique ways
• Push timely messages and information to users in near real-time
• Strengthen relationships with customers
• Establish themselves as thought leaders in a particular market or specialty
• Target a generation of tech-savvy, mobile people

For many organizations, having well-designed, useful apps on users’ or customers’ handheld devices can enhance their image. They provide an innovative way of engaging customers — either by themselves or by calling upon the hardware features of users’ smartphones or tablets, such as audio and video, GPS and cameras.

But apps require care and attention. If customer-facing apps don’t deliver a smooth experience or value-added functionality, customers will stop using them. And if they stop using them, the organization may find it has wasted time and resources on a flawed deployment.
It’s not good to rush a mobile app to market, but it’s not fatal, either. Perhaps the best thing about customer-facing apps is they can be fleeting (tied to a short-term marketing promotion, perhaps, or a sweepstakes). It’s important for organizations to be agile — if an app isn’t delivering value, get rid of it and start over.

Business-facing apps:

These apps are more enduring because they’re often tied to a work process — one that existed before and will still exist tomorrow, whether people use mobile devices or not. Business-facing apps are usually confined to an organization’s employees and strategic partners, the same way that its applications are limited in traditional computing environments. They can be tailored to the particular organization’s sales force, customer-service department, marketing division or other groups of users.

*Which Apps to Mobilize?*

When it comes to business-facing mobile apps, research indicates that the most popular are e-mail clients and personal information managers (PIMs). Increasingly, however, organizations are mobilizing their database access, corporate intranets and conferencing applications. But the opportunities to create mobile apps from enterprise apps are many. Some areas ripe for mobile app development include:

- Online purchasing
- Automated billing systems
- Content management
- IT service management
- Customer relationship management (CRM)
- Resource planning
- Business intelligence
- HR management
- Forms automation
- Unified communications

Of course, mobilizing all of an organization’s apps at once may be unreasonable. When deciding which apps to mobilize first, organizations must consider several things, including how many people will use the app (the more widespread, the bigger the investment in deployment and support), what existing systems the app must integrate with (the more integration, the longer the development cycle), and the measurable benefits the organization wants to achieve by mobilizing an app (the more benefits, the higher a priority).

In general, apps that enhance service to customers or partners, and apps that improve internal work processes, are ideal candidates for an organization getting started with mobile apps.

Business-facing apps include sales tools for employees in the field, CRM, online purchasing, content management, business intelligence, resource planning, forms automation, unified communications and more. They can include mobile versions of vertical market-specific apps for healthcare, government, engineering and education.

Business-facing apps deliver a series of benefits to the organization that deploys them, including:

- Better responsiveness to constituents and partners
- Better collaboration with customers and partners
- Better collaboration internally among coworkers
- Mobile access to existing enterprise resources to improve productivity
- Greater employee satisfaction by giving workers the latest tools for doing their jobs remotely

But one of the greatest benefits of business-facing apps is support for bring-your-own-device initiatives. Through BYOD, organizations can enjoy the benefits of enabling more effective collaboration and work processes. By deploying IT-approved, business-facing mobile apps for employees’ smartphones, organizations give them the tools they need to be more productive while exercising a measure of control over what those tools are and how they interface securely with enterprise resources.

The Challenges

Using mobile apps is a straightforward proposition: Find them, download them to a smartphone or tablet and launch them. But for organizations that want to offer mobile apps to customers, users, constituents or employees, there’s considerable planning involved — from deciding what platforms an app should run on to keeping track of all the apps the organization deploys.

*Mobile app development:* By some estimates, mobile application developers spend a fraction of their time creating new, feature-rich apps. They spend the majority of their time making sure those apps work across multiple mobile platforms.

In an ideal world, mobile app development would focus more on features, usability and differentiation than on deployment. Often, what ends up happening is organizations rush feature-poor apps to market because they know they’ll run on various platforms. Or they deploy mobile, browser-based apps — not native mobile apps — as a short-term solution.

If an organization determines it wants to develop an app — even if it intends to hire an app developer — it has several choices. On one hand, programmers can develop a native mobile app that is designed for use on a particular platform — Apple iOS, Google Android, Microsoft Phone, Symbian or
The Case for Mobile Apps

RIM BlackBerry – or device. Or it can opt for a cross-platform mobile website that can run on a variety of different platforms and mobile devices via a browser.

(Note, hybrid apps, offering cross-platform compatibility, and dedicated web apps, tailored to a specific platform or form factor, represent other options.)

Native development tools typically create apps that run more smoothly on the targeted mobile platform. The apps usually tie in better with the underlying operating system in order to take advantage of the platform’s features.

For organizations that want to deploy business-facing apps, natively developed apps may be the best choice, especially if they have standardized most of their users on one or two mobile platforms. Platform-specific apps are well suited to narrowly defined users and use cases, but they can end up being more costly, particularly as mobile device usage grows and organizations change their preferred platforms.

Cross-platform app development makes sense if the goal is to get an app onto as many devices as possible. When an app is platform-agnostic, it can draw from different app libraries that reflect the best features from multiple development efforts. Cross-platform tools can also be used to build browser-based mobile apps — in effect, embedding a mobile browser into a native app to render web-based content in HTML5, JavaScript or some other format. In this way, organizations may be able to deploy rich mobile apps quickly and cost-effectively, combining the best of both native and mobile website apps.

Regardless of the development approach an organization or its app design partner takes, it should follow these best practices:

- **Focus on the user experience.** Not only should the app be easy to use, it should be easy on battery life. Power consumption can make or break an app when users are on the go. Minimize the hardware calls the app makes to save juice.

- **Incorporate analytics.** This is especially important for native apps, which aren’t always connected to the Internet. An app should include a way of reporting back about how it’s being used and logging any application crashes to help with troubleshooting.

- **Design consistently.** If an organization plans to offer its app across multiple platforms, it should take into account how the app will operate on each platform. The look may change to suit the different devices, but the functionality shouldn’t vary dramatically except to exploit platform-specific features.

**Mobile app management:** As the number of mobile apps increases, organizations that want to exploit their benefits also need to monitor and manage their use, especially in BYOD situations. This is no different than an IT department that monitors and manages the organization’s applications that employees use on their PCs.

Enterprise App Store and MDM

In today’s bring-our-own-device (BYOD) environment, more staffers are using mobile devices – smartphones and tablets – to access organization apps. Following the consumer trend started by Apple’s iTunes Store and Google’s Android Market (now called Google Play), a company app store is a logical part of a BYOD strategy.

Regardless of whether the organization is issuing devices or letting users bring their own, mobile app stores offer value by providing efficient and secure distribution of apps while helping ensure they are purchased at the best prices. They can also eliminate the need to process staff expense reports for app purchases. And they can save IT shops the burden of migrating apps to individual devices or uploading each individual app onto a public app store.

Mobile device management (MDM) solutions may offer the integrated ability to manage mobile app stores for IT shops and organization end users. Combining an app store with single sign-on or identity management, along with an MDM solution, can offer security along with an efficient end-user experience for the distribution and delivery of mobile apps organizationwide.

However, it can be more complicated, considering that mobile apps may run on a range of disparate devices and mobile operating systems (many of which users change more frequently than, say, desktop operating systems). They also operate both online and offline, and they access the same resources via smartphone that a worker may access later via PC.

In many cases, the same tools that organizations use to manage fleets of devices can be used to manage the apps running on those devices. Mobile device management (MDM) software helps provision devices, manage them across multiple platforms, enforce security policies, disable lost or stolen devices and, ultimately, manage the applications running on those devices.

Mobile application management (MAM) features typically include granular levels of access for users as well as custom enterprise app stores. (In some cases enterprise app stores can point users to public app stores. Tracking usage of volume purchase program licenses can also be included.) Also offered may be the ability to push apps and configuration changes along with app whitelists and blacklists.

The combination of functions, MDM, MAM and security can be incorporated under the umbrella of enterprise mobility management. Broadly defined, EMM consists of a set of people, processes and technology focused on managing the increasing array of mobile devices, networks and related services.
**Turnkey Mobility**

For organizations looking to furnish their workforce with mobile devices and apps, the best way to deploy mobile apps may be to have them pre-loaded before workers get their devices. Preconfiguring mobile devices with a suite of tested enterprise apps can help save time, money and effort. It can also ensure the organization’s workforce is ready to be productive as soon as they have the device in their hand.

Some IT vendors offer software installation and configuration services. They also activate the devices through the organization’s chosen wireless carrier and handle everything from inventory management to device recycling, depending on need.

Depending on the size of an organization’s mobile workforce, turnkey devices and outsourced management can be a steppingstone to a full-blown mobile IT solution or a low-cost way to enjoy the benefits of mobility in a growing enterprise.

However an organization approaches mobile app management, these are just some of the questions it must constantly ask about its apps:

- **What’s running?** Within the organization, it’s important to know what apps employees are running on their devices. This information feeds into mobile policy enforcement and helps troubleshoot conflicts.

- **Where is it running?** For device-agnostic apps, the organization should know on what devices its apps are running. This will help focus development and support efforts later.

- **Where do users get it?** If an organization offers a customer-facing app through more than one outlet, it’s important to know which outlet is most successful. Along different lines, if an organization is monitoring its own fleet of mobile devices (or BYOD devices), it’s helpful to know where employees are getting their apps in order to enforce policies.

- **Is it secure?** Clearly, one of the most important characteristics of a mobile app is whether or not it can be maliciously exploited to gain access to the device, its data or enterprise resources. As with other computing platforms, the more people use mobile apps, the more they become a target for hackers.

- **What device features does it use?** An app that constantly accesses a device’s wireless radio when it doesn’t need to, for instance, may raise a red flag. It’s not that the app is doing anything nefarious without the user’s knowledge, but it may be adversely affecting performance and battery life.

**Mobile app security:** Security is critical to mobile app deployment. In August 2012, Arxan Technologies reported that 92 percent of the Top 100 paid Apple iOS apps and 100 percent of the Top 100 paid Android apps had been hacked. Free apps are also vulnerable, Arxan found.

As mobile apps evolve from being fun and games to supporting work functions, app security becomes more important. And it’s not enough to ensure the app itself is secure. Mobile app security requires a layered approach that focuses on the app, the device and the data (both in transit and at rest).

For example, no organization can consider using mobile apps for work functions without planning for encryption. IT should also have the ability — with the knowledge of employees — to remotely delete apps and/or data from a user’s device if either the device or the app has been compromised or poses a security risk to the organization’s network.

BYOD environments must consider a host of security and policy decisions. This includes whether to regulate personal and professional apps or to implement “sandboxing,” which walls off a portion of a device’s operating environment for running only approved mobile apps. In today’s nascent BYOD environment, IT teams must also assure the capability of selective remote-wipe of organizational data in the sandbox or container, leaving the user with personal data intact.

**Up Close and Wireless**

In today’s mobile world, it’s possible for two people to aim their smartphones at each other and share information, photos and more. With the right mobile apps, they can “touch and transact” for entertainment or business.

Near-field communication (NFC) describes a series of wireless smartphone standards, built on radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, that allow two devices to connect wirelessly just by bringing them close together. Unlike earlier flavors of the technology, NFC is a two-way communication system, which makes it perfect for sales and marketing.

With the right mobile app and an NFC-enabled smartphone, users can waive their devices in front of other NFC-capable systems to transfer files, access secure systems using encrypted codes or pay for goods and services. Google Wallet, for example, uses NFC to allow consumers to make purchases using Android smartphones.

Organizations can use NFC similarly to how they use QR codes or other low-cost, one-way communication. By pointing an NFC-enabled smartphone at an NFC tag or label (often on a so-called smart poster or printed ad), consumers can wirelessly receive coupons or information about products.

Global consulting firm Deloitte expects that 300 million NFC-equipped devices, including smartphones, tablets and e-readers, will be shipped in 2013, up from an estimated 200 million in 2012.
**CDW: A Mobile App and Mobility Partner That Gets IT**

We can help get your staff mobile fast. Because we maintain partnerships with leading wireless vendors – including network providers and device manufacturers – we offer a one-stop shop of integrated mobility solutions consisting of software (security and management), hardware devices (smartphones, tablets and notebooks) and cellular wireless activation services.

Regardless of the mobile platform you choose, CDW’s national providers can step in to help with activation and configuration services. What’s more, we will ensure that the apps you want running on employees’ wireless devices are installed and configured correctly before they turn on their devices the first time.

CDW offers a complete line of IT products and services. This includes leading MDM solutions for organizations that plan to deploy and secure their own fleet of smartphones and tablets.

Your CDW account manager and solution architects are ready to assist with every phase of choosing and leveraging the right mobility solution for your IT environment.

Our approach includes:

- An initial discovery session to understand your goals, requirements and budget
- An assessment review of your existing environment and definition of project requirements
- Detailed vendor evaluations, recommendations, future design and proof of concept
- Procurement, configuration and deployment of the final solution
- Ongoing project measurements to meet service-level agreements (SLAs)
- Complete product lifecycle support
- Consolidated device and solution management platform

Working with your CIO, management team or IT department, we can design, plan, implement and support comprehensive mobile solutions built around you and your organization’s needs.

To learn more about CDW’s mobility solutions, contact your CDW account manager, call 800.800.4239 or visit CDW.com/mobility

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