By Brian Madden

↑ C THE ECONOMY

recovers, BYOPC will

become mandatory.
In a nutshell, Bring Your Own PC is a concept many businesses are adopting in which they let users "own" their laptops.

In some cases, the users literally own their own laptops—they bring their personal devices into the office. In other cases, the company still buys and owns the physical laptops, but the users "own" the configuration, and they're able to download and install whatever they want.

There are many different desktop virtualization technologies and products that support BYOPC, including virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), centrally managed client-based virtual machines (VMs), application virtualization, and operating system streaming.

Mixed Reviews

Corporate reactions to the concept are mixed. Some companies view BYOPC as a management timesaver. If users can do whatever they want in their "own" environments, perhaps IT only has to support a single corporate image that can be easily and securely run in a VM on the client device. Doing so provides a best of both worlds balance between user freedom and IT supportability.

Of course, not every IT admin views BYOPC as a good thing. Some people think "Hrmph! We will never allow non-IT- controlled user devices on our network!" Ultimately, this view is shortsighted. After all, don't most companies currently allow employees to connect to business applications from their home computers? If so, isn't that basically the same thing as BYOPC? (At least in terms of non-corporate devices accessing corporate apps and data?)

Take It or Leave It

So, in one form or another, BYOPC should be possible in just about every corporate environment. But why will it become mandatory?

Today's younger generation (often called the "Echo Generation" or "Gen Y") grew up with PCs, the Internet, cell phones, and Facebook. Even the nontechnical members of that generation are comfortable with technology, and as a workforce, they don't accept locked-down corporate laptops.

My Way or the Highway?

It's easy for companies to shrug off this generation of workers.
"Pfft! Who cares about these kids? So what if they don't like it. This is work." The problem is that these "kids" are turning 30 years old this year. They now have multiple university degrees, MBAs, and several years of work experience. They are an important part of every company, and companies have to do their best to attract and retain them.

And, the percentage of the workforce that the Echo Generation occupies is growing each year. If

you consider that the average career lasts 40 years, then every year we see 2.5% of the people retire, to be replaced by 2.5% more people born after 1980.

Plan for The Future

The good news for companies today is that the depressed global economy gives them something of a "free pass" on this. "We don't need BYOPC," we can say. "And if you don't like it, then try to find another job." However, as the economy recovers, these younger folks will be able to find other jobs, and we'll have to figure out ways to attract them.

This is where BYOPC comes in. A company that gives employees the option to do whatever they want with their laptops (and the option to use Macs and iPhones), will come out ahead. BYOPC will become a standard "perk" of the job, like health care or nice chairs.

So your options are:

- Start preparing for BYOPC right now.
- 2. Think about what it will be like in 2015, when your company doesn't have any employees under age 35.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Madden is an independent industry analyst and blogger, known throughout the world as an opinionated, supertechnical desktop virtualization expert. He has written several books and more than 1,000 articles about desktop and application virtualization.

