Enterprise Mobility ranks highly for IT investment, 25% of businesses rate mobility as a priority in 2012, finds Frost & Sullivan

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In , Frost & Sullivan surveyed 206 C level executives/IT managers/IT decision makers about enterprise mobility. The survey found that a majority of businesses in have a favourable view of BYOD, with 61% of businesses supporting BYOD. Within this group, 34% of businesses allow BYOD for all employees and offer full support for devices, with another 27% allowing BYOD for specific departments.

In the report, *Australian Enterprise Mobility Market 2012*, *due for release in* , enterprise mobility ranks high in terms of priority compared to other IT investments. More than 25% of businesses rate mobility to be either their top priority, or a very important priority in 2012.

One of the main aspects of enterprise mobility that is attractive to employers and employees alike is The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) strategy. "Allowing employees to use a device of their choice to work through supporting a BYOD strategy is advantageous for organisations with benefits such as increased productivity, greater employee retention (achieved through enhanced job satisfaction) and cost savings through lower capital and operating costs. However, security risks are a concern for many organisations in supporting BYOD," says Audrey William, head of Research, & New Zealand ICT Practice.

56% of businesses cite security as their top concern from adopting a BYOD strategy. This concern is driven by challenges in addressing the relatively unknown environment of mobile devices. Businesses that spent significant resources in securing laptops and desktops now have to expend their portfolio of devices supported to include mobile devices.

"59% of businesses cite document and file sharing applications such as Office, OpenOffice, and Google Docs as offering the most productivity benefits for businesses. Email is mentioned as the second most productivity enhancing app by 58% of businesses. Voice based apps such as Skype, Lync and Google Chat are considered by 25% of businesses to be offering the most productivity benefits for employees. Advancements in device hardware and software (OS and apps) are making tablets and smartphones suitable devices to carry out voice calls or conferences," says Audrey.

The adoption of desktop virtualisation for the purpose of enabling BYOD is currently viewed as a 'nice-to-have' and not an essential requirement. This sentiment is indicated by 45% of businesses in , which do not use desktop virtualisation as part of their BYOD strategy. "Desktop virtualisation is still in its early stages of growth in the market," Audrey explains.

"Another key enabling factor for enterprise mobility is the cloud based delivery model for applications. With applications stored and delivered from the cloud, the endpoint device is largely irrelevant, with access allowed through smartphones, tablet devices or laptops. While players such as Google are offering fully cloud based applications, traditional players such as Microsoft and Cisco are also expected to strengthen their portfolio of cloud based applications," Audrey explains.

Despite the popularity of Apple's iOS based devices, more businesses prefer the open source models of Google's Android and Microsoft Windows Mobile7 platforms. While the closed environment of Apple's iOS platform allows greater control and better quality of apps, businesses place greater emphasis on the ability to customise the platform to better suit their requirements. This preference is indicated by 34% of businesses, with only 17% preferring the benefits of greater security and better quality of apps offered by a closed environment (iOS).

Audrey says that Australian businesses are confident about the role of Microsoft as the provider of end-point operating systems in 2015. 65% of businesses consider Microsoft as holding enough expertise in desktop applications (Office, Outlook, Lync etc) to remain a major player in the mobile Operating System (OS) segment and expect Microsoft to extend the functionality of its Office/Outlook/SharePoint applications to mobile devices by further strengthening its mobile OS.

Optimistic about Google's capabilities as an enterprise player, 45% of businesses indicated that Google has the potential to challenge Microsoft's dominance in the market. This view is largely due to Google steadily strengthening its productivity and collaboration solutions to offer a cloud based alternative to Microsoft's Office suite.

Frost & Sullivan's ***Australian Enterprise Mobility Report 2012*** report forms part of the Frost & Sullivan Australian Enterprise Communications program. All research services included in this subscription provide detailed market opportunities and industry trends evaluated following extensive interviews with market participants. Interviews with the press are available. If you are interested in more information on this study, please send an e-mail with your contact details to Donna Jeremiah, Corporate Communications, at djeremiah@frost.com [1].

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