

## What is BYOD?

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A new acronym has been popping up in businesses and business technology recently - BYOD stands for Bring Your Own Device. It's starting to become a hot topic of late because more and more businesses are allowing employees to bring in their own smartphones, notebooks, tablets, etc. This trend can be attributed to the development of cloud technology and smartphones, specifically the iPhone, due to their ability to view and share documents anywhere.

### Benefits of BYOD

The most obvious benefit of adopting BYOD practices is that it can save businesses and organizations money. Since employees bring their own devices into the office, the cost of that hardware is not your burden, thus saving you money. You also don't have to train your workers (as much) on how to use their devices, which saves even more money. Also, many of the devices brought in are cutting edge.

Another benefit of BYOD is employee satisfaction. There is a reason why employees bring their own devices to work: They prefer those devices. They are much more familiar with them, which make them easier to use. Bringing their own devices can decrease many of the frustrations that can be caused by unfamiliar technology. (Yes, we at The Computing Center do embrace BYOD. Several of our employees have their own smartphones, and a couple have their own iPads and the like. We keep track of everyone's smart device and make sure it conforms to our systems and security.)

### Concerns

While BYOD may seem like a wonderful idea, there are some potential drawbacks. When the company provides the hardware, they can manage its use. Telling workers what is or isn't acceptable use is much easier. When employees bring in the own devices, enforcing certain kinds of uses during business hours is more difficult. The need for an acceptable use policy is imperative, but needs to fit the allowance of employee owned devices.

Probably the most important issue with BYOD is security of your data. First, depending on the type of data, some of it may be contained on a device not owned by the organization. For instance, company

email accessed via an iPhone, iPad, or Android device will be fully or partially stored on that device as well as the company's servers. Should that device be lost or stolen, that email data may be as well. Security needs to be coordinated in some fashion. Second, should an employee leaves the company and they have a device containing company data, then that data needs to be retrieved. Third, companies that fall under PCI DSS, HIPAA, or GLBA mandates regarding data must enforce their guidelines, regardless of device ownership.

## **Next Steps**

We have clients in all camps and have helped them develop various solutions and business policies to integrate BYOD into their organizations. Overall, the BYOD trend is going to continue to develop and is a logical option to many organizations if the proper policies and security measures are implemented.