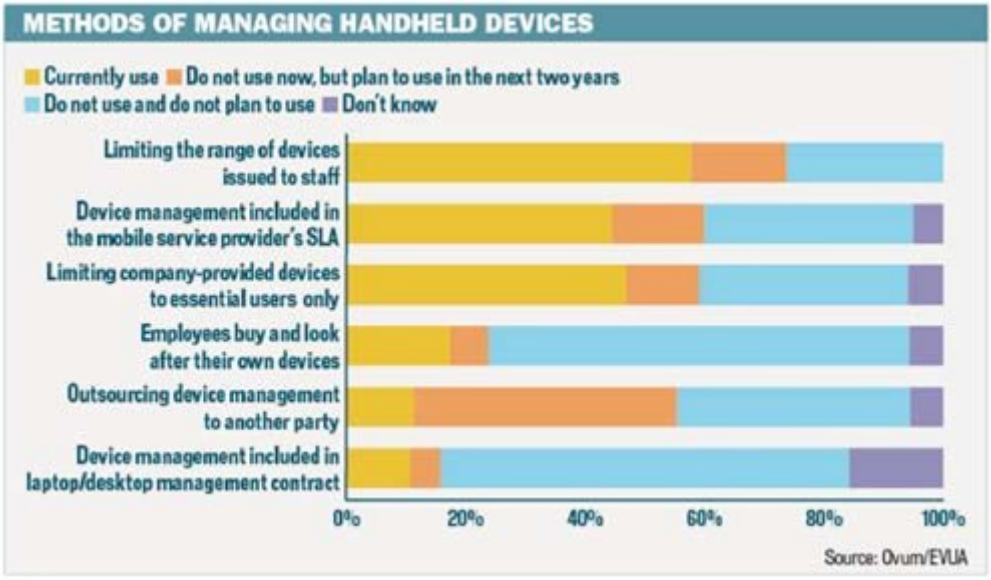
Corporate Instant Messaging

In a survey completed by independent research firm Coleman Parkes Research Ltd., 79 percent of CIOs recognized a need for device management solutions. About 80 percent of CIOs surveyed indicated device management is becoming more difficult and complex. To deal with the rapidly evolving mobile environment, enterprises want a management solution that involves their key mobile network operators. And they want a solution that gives them day-to-day control of their valuable corporate mobile assets and ensures the security of critical corporate information. In fact, 91 percent of CIOs surveyed in the Coleman Parkes research indicated that they expect the mobile operator to be part of this solution.

“Large enterprises have been quite slow in taking up mobility devices, and it has not developed in a clean way,” says Pauline Trotter, principal analyst, enterprise practice, at Ovum. “It has reached a point of unmanageability.”

Ovum has carried out research on mobility device issues with the EVUA, the ICT network user group for multinational companies. Among the EVUA members which took part, and with an average of over 40,000 employees, the biggest device management method was simply limiting the range of devices and the people allowed to use them (see chart below).



“Generally service provider support is limited and…is rated ‘poor’ to ‘adequate’. This is changing and enterprises do think their mobile service

provider is best placed to help with device management," says an Ovum/EVUA report on the research.

"There are an awful lot of challenges for enterprise rollouts of 10,000 [handset] units," says Neil Bonner, product manager for mobile computing, EMEA, at Motorola. "They [enterprises] must be able to control the devices [once deployed]. Their businesses run on them."

Challenges include setting correctly the access rights of each user, locking and deleting sensitive data should a handset be lost, diagnosing faults, and adding and updating handset applications. "All this needs to be done on a device that may not come in [to the office] for three years," says Bonner.

Device management for enterprises can be viewed as an extension to traditional IT department management of company laptops. Like laptops, corporates can standardize on a choice set of handsets, simplifying their support and IT training required. That, at least, is the theory.

The challenges for Corporate messaging have been documented by IDC, Gartner, Forrester Group, Osterman Research and Aberdeen to name a few. The variety of devices and complexity of mobile software indicate continued challenges for the next generation of messaging systems.

With years of experience in this market, Wirelessworx understands these limitations, the basis for complexity and the uncertainty with regard to existing developments.

Wirelessworx took a different approach

- Software not reliant on terminal Operating Systems
- End to end application control, management and functionality
- Device management including data, authentication and authority
- Highest level of security in data encryption
- Flexibility to run across all types of networks and all types of devices.

(Please see the Technical Design documents from Wirelessworx for more details)

Research also indicated that 'always connected' solutions were a reality. This diminished the need for complex and expensive mobile data applications prevalent in the market over the past 7 years.

The target market was not 'connectivity' as most wireless applications enable today but work process specific: recognizing people, logging time and attendance, distributing tasks and supporting automated data collect.

Fundamentally these tasks needed to be accomplished in a robust, low cost manner.

Technologies are now available to make many of the prior challenges with mobile data solutions much easier: bar code reading, printing, GPS and RFID to name a few.

Our design approach was to combine the best in user experiences from SMS messaging and internet search engines with a strong administration system (from our experience with wireless LAN management). The result is a highly usable and functional messaging system suitable to a wide range of work force communications:

- Capable of sending all types of data: text, Unicode, documents, files, pictures
- All messages are time/date stamped, by user and managed for potential audit
- Users can start working with the system without training
- Organisations can customize the messages and interface to existing applications and Corporate data.

Use case examples extend to health care services, building safety inspection, investigators, service providers, hospitality, security - the opportunities are almost limitless.

Wirelessworx has built a platform for software companies and content providers
- does not impact any existing functionality on phones, laptops, desktops
- compliments the move to Unified Communications software
- enables centralized management and administration
- ensures data integrity and security

This platform can significantly lower communication costs with guaranteed messaging transmission and receipt.

This is how it works:

- Embedded: a lightweight application is loaded on a mobile phone and runs without impacting any other function on the phone. Devices are authorised for each worker and authenticated while in use.

- Workers see a simple, common user interface to receive and transmit messages (like SMS but with drop down examples - simple data input)

- A hosted administration console is available either web hosted or installed on a customer server. All administrative or technical interfaces happen on the console.

- Messaging is secure, auditable and managed by the central system. No technical routines for the workers - no data left on the device.

As higher speed networks and a greater number of mobile devices proliferate the market - the attractiveness of mobile computing will expand. However given the research there are many traps and roadblocks along the road to success for users.

It is after all only with user success, that mobile computing worx!