DIGITAL DIALOGUE

Highlights from a recent webcast on moving to Microsoft Windows 10

GET AHEAD OF YOUR WINDOWS 10 MIGRATION

This Digital Dialogue is based on a discussion of Windows 10 and the challenges IT professionals face with the migration to the new operating system.

Windows 10 is on the move, with more than 400 million active devices running the operating system as of September 2016, according to Microsoft. Even in businesses that haven't taken a big-bang migration approach, the OS' presence can be felt as BYOD-empowered users bring their new Windows 10-equipped PCs, laptops and tablets to work or executives push IT to switch them over so they can access cutting-edge capabilities like Windows Hello biometric security.

The increasingly strong state of Windows 10 migrations is reflected in two surveys conducted one year apart from each other by Dimensional Research. At the end of 2015, forty-one percent of IT respondents had not installed Windows 10 anywhere. That figure shrunk to just seven percent by the end of 2016. Ten percent claimed to be fully in production last year, though the majority remains in the early stages, using Windows 10 in limited environments.

Whether migration occurs by stealth, as people take to using their own Windows 10 systems on the job, or by a more formalized IT process—or a combination of both—enterprises will reap multiple benefits from the move. Inevitably, their IT departments will face new challenges, too, as they work out how to effectively manage migrations and deal with other key

changes. That includes an altered refresh cadence with Microsoft's plans to release feature updates to the operating system twice a year, each to be supported and serviced for 18 months.

The time to get ahead of the challenges is now, to ensure a smooth transition into full-scale production environments.

Tackling Management Hurdles

Windows 10 is a big part of the story when it comes to utilizing some new technology from Microsoft, like facial and fingerprint recognition and the Universal Windows Platform that lets developers build apps that users can run on devices of any size, from PCs to cell

phones. Other advantages that Windows 10 offers include better performance with faster logins; the ability to integrate devices with Azure Active Directory for organizations whose apps and resources are primarily in the cloud; and mobile application management support for managing access to corporate data on personally owned devices.

But obstacles will have to be overcome to gain these benefits. The management difficulties IT departments will encounter as the organization steps into Windows 10 include the fact that they're likely to have to support— at least for some period—a hybrid environment where a mix of Windows operating systems are in simultaneous

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use. IT pros may also probably will struggle with getting a handle on what devices are currently being used, their OS status, and if their hardware is end-of-life or even capable of supporting Windows 10. They'll seek to discover what their current application and data sets look like, as well. If IT and software asset management isn't up to providing that level of understanding, it will be hard to make educated decisions about which machines and which users are poised to migrate to Windows 10.

Data sprawl is another management concern, considering that today's more mobile users follow their own inclinations about saving files in multiple storage sites across their systems. Knowing where those files are to capture data can be a fairly laborious process, not to mention the time spent on moving, synching and backing it up prior to migration.

There's also the issue of Windows version changes creating local and roaming profile incompatibilities—everything from wallpaper choices to Outlook signatures can be affected. This can jeopardize what people most covet: A consistent user experience. Any damage to that can't help but impact the ultimate success of the Windows 10 migration project itself.

The pain doesn't stop there, because IT also has to consider that once the migration is complete, mobile users will continue to access and work across multiple Windows environments throughout the workday, from physical to virtualized desktops in the data center. Managing the mobile user experience and data across this swath adds to the challenge.

Want more hurdles? How about supporting workers' needs to access their data across different OS and device platforms, too, like iPads and Android smartphones?

Obviously, the consumerization of IT has led to higher enterprise user demands than ever before. Their desire for fast access, consistent experiences, and steady profiles and data across environments and operating systems often conflicts with IT professional's efforts to try to do more with less. Being in that position can make IT pros disinclined to take on tasks like moving large profile and data sets around the network. They can become even more weary as they contemplate new OS updates coming down the pike every six months in what can seem like a never-ending cascade of mini-migrations.

Windows 10 Migration Made Easier
Fortunately, there's a three-step approach offered by Ivanti that eases every aspect of Windows 10 migrations. Its User Workplace Manager solution take on the tasks of:

■ Detecting applications and user data and centrally reporting on user configurations before migrating for decision-making insight into when replacements, re-imaging or upgrades are appropriate;

■ Preparing endpoints for settings, profile and data migration, via a layered approach to on-demand person-alization across operating systems and in concert with context-aware policy controls; and

■ Eliminating data sprawl by effortlessly syncing user files from local endpoints to either on-premises storage or Cloud-based Microsoft OneDrive storage.

It's complete, automated end-to-end migration that removes many burdens from IT while meeting end users' high expectations. It all happens without missing settings, configuration and data, thanks to the technology's ability to provide an analysis of existing environments to ensure that the required application privileges, settings and user data are all available post-migration wherever and however they are needed.

Equally compelling is that there's no productivity loss as the migration process is 100% unobtrusive to the end user.

IT departments that leverage Ivanti solutions no longer need to get migraines from being in a near-constant state of migration. Rather, it lets IT pros overcome significant challenges to deliver to the organization the many benefits that Windows 10 offers for today's digital businesses.