

3 Things that make workspaces intelligent

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Our work is becoming ever more digital. No matter if you're an office worker, doctor, lawyer, warehouse clerk, or truck driver, your workspace environment is - or will soon be - centred around one or several smart devices that let you access the backend applications, web apps, and cloud services you need to perform efficiently.



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For example, one start-up in South Africa, is using artificial intelligence to make farming easier with its technology. By using aerial imagery from drones and satellites and machine learning algorithms this team devised a new method to detect disease on tree farms early on so that farmers can control the damage before it gets out of hand. This example demonstrates that modern workspaces are not only more digital than previous generations, but also more intelligent.

What exactly does an 'intelligent workspace' mean?

There are three types of intelligence to consider in the future:

- **Device-level artificial intelligence**

Smart-device vendors such as Apple, Samsung, or Google are including a steadily-increasing set of artificial intelligence (AI) features in their smart devices. This allows users to make phone calls by simply asking the digital assistant to dial up a person from the contacts list, using natural language commands. Beyond such simple tasks, AI-driven virtual assistants can, for example, suggest an alternative route once they have learned the user's commuting habits and have received information about a traffic jam on the usual route home.

- **Management and security intelligence**

Intelligence doesn't only mean thoughtful behaviour but can also designate information gathering. Security vendors, for example, use so-called 'threat-intelligence feeds' to receive up-to-date information about new malware, threat actors, and attack vectors. In a similar way, a modern digital workspace management solution uses machine learning to gather intelligence about the normal behaviour patterns of users, applications, and the corporate network.

Machine-learning-assisted information gathering helps IT and security teams in their daily work by providing reliable, real-time information about a suspicious application, network, or user behaviour. This allows the IT organisation to detect performance degradations and security risks much earlier than by simply reacting to help desk calls or official security alerts.

- **Guided work capabilities**

Finally, there are various intelligent features embedded in a secure digital workspace solution. For example, a modern intelligent workspace allows users to read a Microsoft Word document or Excel sheet on their notebook, and then seamlessly continue reading on their tablet computer or smartphone while roaming the corporate campus. Providing an easy-to-use interface for single sign-on to all applications, services, and data pools connected to the user's role, while automatically restricting access to apps and services not compliant with corporate usage policies (or that specific user's role).

It automatically switches from the regular web browser to a secure, cloud-based browser as soon as the user visits a website that is considered dangerous or suspicious. This also allows easily moving from e-mail to the collaboration tool Slack for more convenient information exchange between colleagues.

Furthermore, it streamlines routine activities – such as office supply requests, applications for leave, or approvals of quotes or contracts – by abstraction and automation.

Using these three intelligence dimensions, an intelligent workspace makes end users more productive.

First, it takes advantage of device-level artificial intelligence across all kinds of smart and/or mobile devices in usage across the enterprise; it applies threat detection and IT management intelligence to keep the IT environment operating reliably and securely.

Second, it brings all kinds of intelligent actions as well as smart cross-app interoperation to the user workspace, making the execution of routine task faster and more convenient, keeping end users satisfied and productive.

Third, it reduces the risks of online behaviour, making the work of IT management and IT security teams easier. For those enterprises that haven't yet switched to intelligent workspaces, it's high time to get on board. Or else, very soon, the conductor checking your ticket on your next train ride might have a more modern workspace than your company staff.

ABOUT BRENDAN MCARAVEY

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