

White Paper

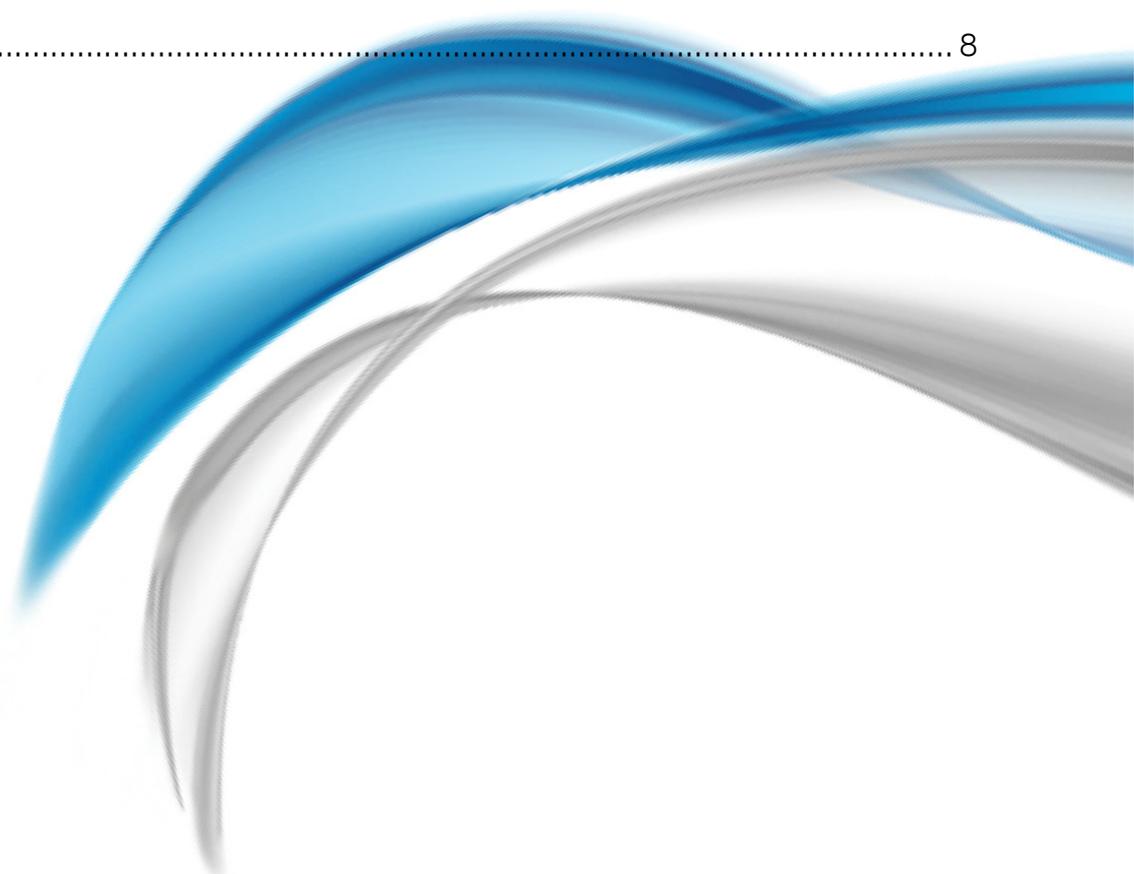
4 Reasons to Love Mobile on IBM i



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Abstract

Mobile devices and apps have revolutionized the way we live and work. For many of us, smartphones and tablets have become essential tools for both personal and work activities. Getting mobile right can provide your business with significant capabilities to perform many of our daily tasks with more efficiency and productivity, especially for workers that are not bound to a desk.

In this report we will cover 4 important and valuable reasons why you should consider implementing a mobile strategy with your IBM i applications.

The mobile revolution

As we head towards the end of 2013, the adoption of mobile devices continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. By the end of this year, 1.4 billion smartphones will be in use worldwide (Source: ABI Research), and tablets are on track to outsell PCs. These really are amazing statistics, especially when we consider just how young these technologies are (tablets were first introduced in 2010).

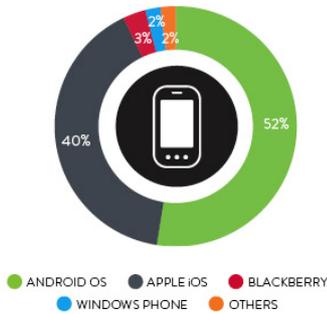
However, the real revolution is in how these devices are fundamentally changing the way we interact with each other, and how we conduct our day-to-day tasks. For many of us, mobile technologies now play a core role in how we research information, travel, shop, manage our finances, take photos, listen to music, and interact socially with each other. The combination of their processing power, portability, cellular/Wi-Fi data access, integration with the cloud and built-in hardware capabilities such as GPS, audio and camera, allow for a significantly wide scope of applications and solutions.

Let's take a closer look at how many of us are using these devices and which operating systems in particular are being adopted. In the US, researchers are reporting that 62% of mobile subscribers are now using smartphones, a trend that continues to increase healthily year-on-year. In terms of mobile operating system adoption, Google's Android and Apple's iOS have emerged as the clear leaders in the race, although it would be foolish to predict mobile OS market share with accuracy over the next several years.



TOP US SMARTPHONE OPERATING SYSTEMS BY MARKET SHARE

DURING Q2 2013



Read as: During Q2 2013 an average of 52% of smartphone owners in the US had a handset that runs the Android operating system.

In terms of hardware device market share, Apple are currently the leader in that space. In their most recent keynote (Sep 10th, 2013), their CEO Tim Cook disclosed that over

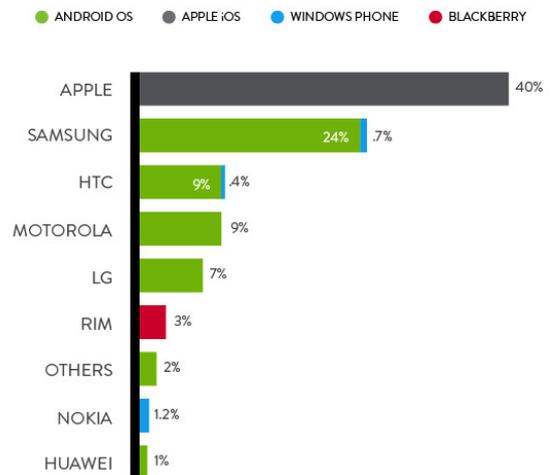
“700 million iOS devices have been sold to date.”

What does all this mean for IBM i customers?

Given the strong track record that IBM i holds in terms of reliability, security, performance, robustness and overall cost of ownership, these are fundamental characteristics to deliver enterprise applications to a mobile ecosystem.

SMARTPHONE MANUFACTURER SHARE BY OPERATING SYSTEM

Q2 2013, US MOBILE SUBSCRIBERS



Read as: During Q2 2013, 24% of U.S. smartphone owners used Samsung's Android handsets and .7% had Samsung Windows Phone handsets

Source: Nielsen

Technological synergies aside, there are significant business benefits that can be gained by identifying and implementing mobile solutions to help your users do their job more efficiently. Often the results of well thought out mobile solutions can be measured to show real value to your business and healthily leverage the investment that you already have in your IBM i applications.

Let's now explore the 4 core reasons why you should consider making mobile delivery a core part of your IT application strategy...

Reason 1: Anywhere, anytime access

Not to be confused with expecting users to be working at 3 AM on a Sunday morning (unless that is part of their contract), providing real-time access away from a traditional desk environment enables many users a far more efficient and convenient way to access to IBM i applications and data.

Here are some simple and practical examples of anywhere, anytime access:

- Warehouse staff looking up order information from the shop-floor
- Insurance adjusters taking photos and updating claim information from the scene of an accident
- Retail staff looking up inventory information from a store
- Sales staff looking up pricing information whilst visiting a prospect
- Service staff looking up a customer address and getting directions to their location
- Hotel staff checking customers into their rooms
- IT Staff checking weekend backup status on their server from their kids soccer game

There are many variations of these examples and more sophisticated and advanced capabilities that can be added, but it's always a good idea to start out with something simple and have something in production that proves the technology. Look at how users that are away from their desk are currently working, and you can often quickly identify a mobile use-case that can help make their job much easier. Once they have something in their hands you will often find a healthy amount of suggestions and feedback to add further capabilities at a later stage.

Additionally, if you have employees that are sometimes required to work outside of office hours, giving them mobile access can save them having to make a special trip to the office or head home in order to dial-in to the system.

Another area that anywhere, anytime access can help is with self-service. Perhaps there are vendors, partners and/or customers that by providing direct access to your applications could save time and give more flexibility?

Reason 2: Improved efficiencies

Finding a manual task that can be automated with a mobile device can yield quick and tangible business results. For example, do you have remote employees calling in by phone to HQ and having someone look something up on the IBM i? Or perhaps those users are making notes on paper whilst out and keying the data into the system when they are back in the office? These are some simple examples, but can provide quick and easy measurable gains in efficiency.

For example, BakerCorp, a rental company, have reported that their staff now save a minimum of 1 hour per day by having access to their RPG based applications from an iPad. They currently have over 175 users equipped with iPad, which equates to over 3500 hours per month savings. Previously, they had to call the office and have someone else look up the information for them, or go somewhere with Internet access and laptop. There are many other benefits, including access outside of business hours, increased employee morale and more responsive customer support.

Reason 3: Greater customer satisfaction

Take a look at how employees that deal directly with your customers are interacting with them. Especially if those users are remote, you can often find that equipping them with real-time access to your data can help them tremendously. For example, looking up pricing information, product specs, and/or inventory information real-time whilst with the customer in person, rather than getting back to them at a later time can have tangible and positive results.

Taking this one step further, perhaps you can even provide your customers the ability to directly access your system, allowing them to get the information they need at their own convenience?

The implications for improved customer service are far and wide. With a good understanding of how the users are interacting with customers and thinking creatively, there can often be huge returns from just a simple mobile implementation.

Reason 4: Better business results

For organizations that have field operations that deal directly with prospects, having mobile access can often make the difference between closing a sale immediately and deferring it until more information can be provided. This runs the risk of losing the sale to someone else.

For example, Anthony Squires menswear reported an increase in 20% sales by providing mobile access for their staff from retail locations. By providing customers real-time answers to definitive inventory information, they are able to close a sale immediately rather than potentially lose them to a competitor in the same department store. Stafford have also reported a reduction in stock-loss, due to improved inventory control.

Again, these are simple examples, but many types of organizations can benefit greatly from creative use of the technology available today.

Fundamentals when selecting a mobile device:

- **Screen-size:** There are now many options of size to choose from, typically ranging between 3.5" and 10". A smaller screen means more portability, and a larger screen enables more real estate and better readability that can improve the overall experience.
- **Wi-Fi only or Wi-Fi + Cellular:** All smartphones offer both Wi-Fi and cellular access, but tablets often offer cellular access as an option. This is an important consideration if your users will need access outside of Wi-Fi enabled areas. If this is indeed the case, make sure the cellular provider has adequate coverage for the areas that the device will be used. Also, if your users will be performing data intensive tasks, 4G coverage will ensure the application is far more responsive when making requests back and forth from the IBM i.
- **Security options:** VPN and SSL are two key technologies that can ensure your applications are accessed securely. Make sure that the device you select supports your security needs.
- **Durability:** 3rd party cases can often provide protection from drops, water resistance and other potential accidents. Make sure that the device you select offers those options.
- **Battery life:** Battery life varies between devices. If you have users that will be away from a charging station for extended periods, it's important that battery life is sufficient.
- **Local storage:** Today's devices typically offer between 16 GB and 64 GB of local storage. More storage might be important if your users are taking photos or recording audio or video as part of their job.
- **Hardware capabilities:** Built-in features like a camera can be critical, not just for photos and video, but for tasks like barcode scanning too. GPS capability can assist with navigational functions. Also, you may require credit card swipe capabilities that can be supported by 3rd party add-ons.

Summary

Many people incorrectly think that mobile adoption is far more hype and a cool, hip technology rather than an enabler of business efficiencies, but nothing could be further from the truth. Another misconception is that mobile devices are only useful for consumption only, and not data-entry. Obviously mobile devices are not optimal for intensive heads-down data entry, but they can be used to collect data in a variety of ways.

The great thing about mobile is that when implemented successfully, it often has high visibility within an organization, and also gets measurable results quickly. If you haven't thought seriously about mobile before, there's never a better time than now to get started.

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