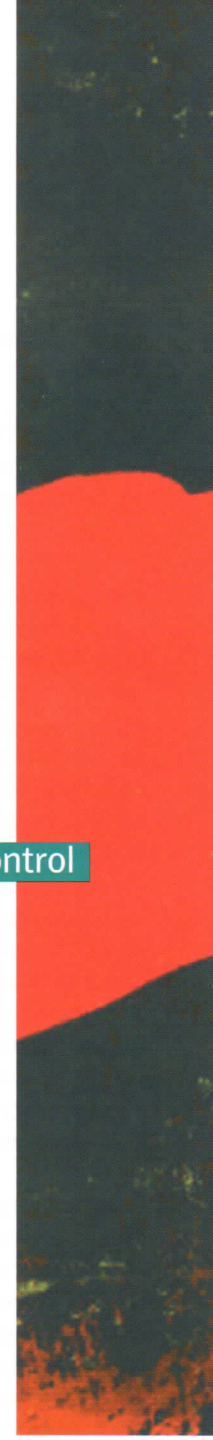
 BY MARK MULLINS



Avoiding App-rehension

Leveraging the power of mobile apps without losing control

It's a new world out there. Your users' mobile phones have more capabilities than ever before. Everyone, it seems, now has a tablet. If you haven't implemented a bring your own device (BYOD) policy, you're facing pressure to do so. And your business units are planning to use enterprise apps—if they're not doing so already—for functions as diverse as customer relationship management (CRM), enterprise resource planning (ERP), training and development, and even accessing customer records and transactions.

"You've got all this data being accessed by these devices, and that makes things more complicated for a CIO," says Andrew Braunberg, research director for the Business Technology and Software Group at Current Analysis, a Sterling, Virginia-based business intelligence firm. "You've got to be able to manage things at the device level, at the application level, and at the data level. I think mobile application management and protection will become a C-level conversation in 2012."

As organizations begin to plunge into this brave new world, *CIO Digest* spoke with IT leaders at three organizations that are innovators in their industries in the use of mobile apps. These diverse businesses have different needs and follow different practices. But they all recognize the power of mobile apps to enhance productivity and positively impact the bottom line, and they're all embracing this technology to build their respective businesses. These industry leaders pinpointed the following as some of the key advantages that mobile apps are bringing to their organizations:

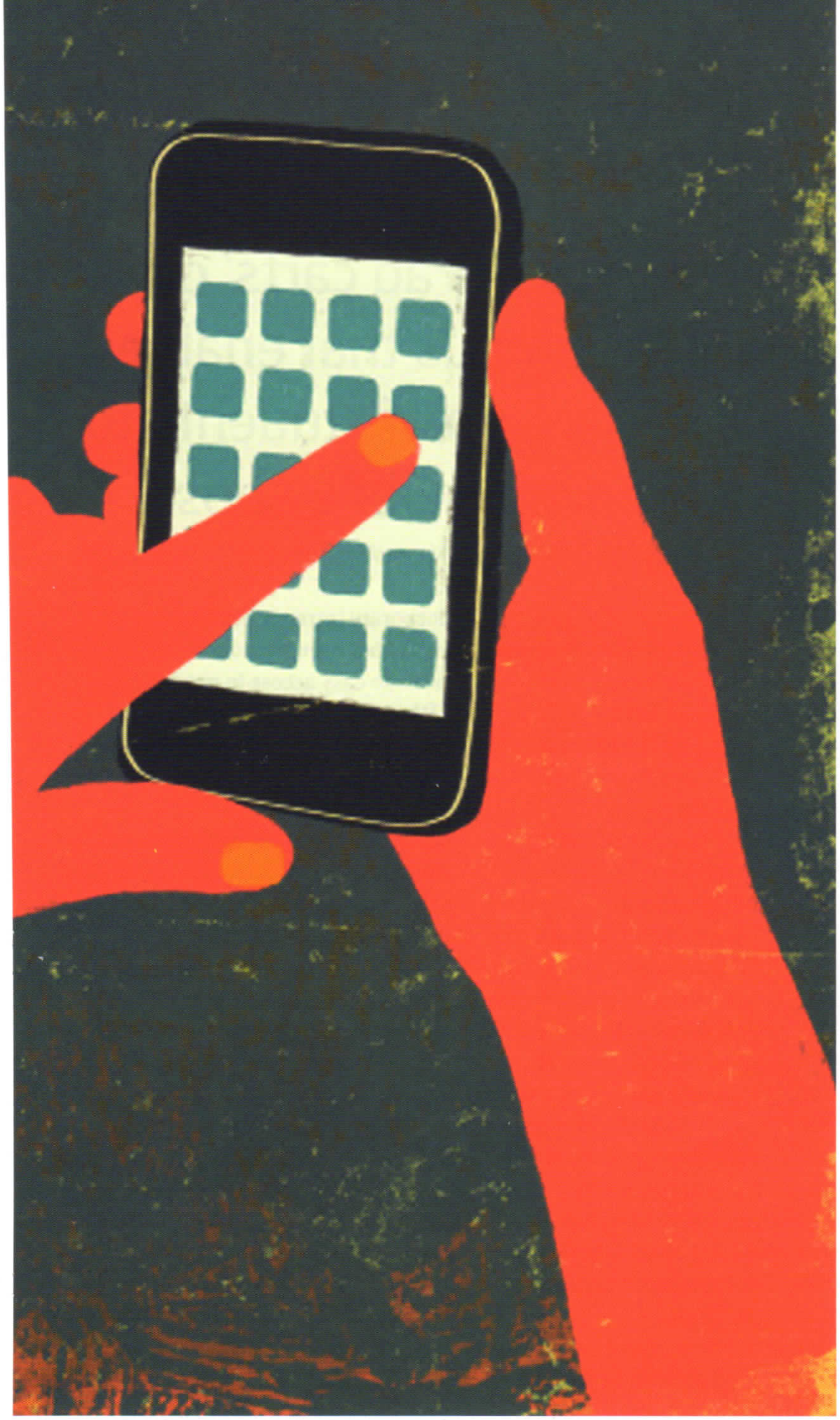
1. Enabling innovation while retaining control

The sheer number of available apps illustrates their potential in finding innovative ways for users to do their jobs more successfully. Enterprise apps can provide secure access to key business applications, and many routine functions can be accomplished with off-the-shelf apps. "Users are starting to expect to use consumer apps on corporate devices, because they just work," Braunberg notes. "The problem is keeping everything under control."

At the Indian River School District (IRSD) in rural southeastern Delaware, technology is an integral part of the education experience. "We have had smartboards in all of our classrooms for several years, because we find that many students learn better that way," explains Superintendent Dr. Susan Bunting. "Now we have 'iPad carts' on each campus that enable a classroom of students to learn with mobile apps."

Each campus has a faculty member designated as the "iPad manager," who carries an Apple MacBook from which apps are remotely deployed and managed for all the tablets on the carts. "They have total flexibility as to which apps are deployed on the carts, as they know the needs of their particular campus," explains Technology Systems Manager Patches Hill, whose six-person team manages all of IRSD's IT infrastructure.

GETTY IMAGES



In addition, teachers are encouraged to experiment with new or unfamiliar apps on the district-owned iPads that many of them carry. Apps found to be effective teaching tools can be added to the devices on the cart. "We don't blacklist any particular app," Hill states. "Being in education, we want teachers to have the flexibility to use what works best for each child."

When IRSD began acquiring iPads soon after their debut in 2008, it quickly became clear that device management would become more of a headache for Hill's small staff. "We already had district-owned smartphones from which our users could access email, but iPads brought a whole new dimension to the problem," Hill recalls. "And it was a part of a larger need for more granular management of all our endpoints."

Earlier this year, IRSD bought Altiris IT Management Suite from Symantec and included Symantec Mobile Management as a part of the purchase. The district plans to deploy the combined solution during this year's summer break. "We'll have much greater visibility into our entire inventory of iPads and the apps they carry," Hill says enthusiastically. "With a click of a mouse, I'll be able to see what technicians have done on each device and what apps are deployed. Managing app clutter will become increasingly important as more apps are downloaded onto our devices."

2. Providing easy access to productivity tools

One advantage of a mobile app is that once it's on the device, it's available at the touch of a finger. "With all the 4G access out there these days, it's much easier than finding a hotspot and booting up a laptop," notes Braunberg. "If tools can be made conveniently available to busy users, their productivity can be enhanced exponentially."

One company has gone so far as to hire a project manager for mobile applications—Hilti Corporation, an international manufacturer of supplies and tools for the construction industry. The Liechtenstein-based firm found a highly qualified candidate for this role in Dr. Christoph Göth, who completed a Ph.D. in mobile learning at the University of Zürich in 2009. "This role is a perfect fit for me after my doctoral studies, which focused on the deployment of mobile apps in a corporate setting," he notes.

Although Hilti employs many engineers and manufacturing employees around the world, half of the firm's 20,000 employees are in sales. "We are a direct sales company," Göth notes. "You can't buy our products from a third party,

Dr. Susan Bunting (right), Superintendent, and D. Patches Hill, Technology Systems Manager, Indian River School District

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> *– Dr. Susan Bunting, Superintendent, Indian River School District*

we have 10,000 sales people who need mobile access to information."

Two years ago, Hilti underwent an upgrade of its SAP CRM systems, moving offline applications into a Web-based, always-on solution. "We realized that this was a big step," Göth recalls. "Our sales force would always be online, and they would always have the information they need. But then we realized that it was taking a lot of time for them to open their laptops, get online, connect to the VPN, go through security protocols, and finally connect to SAP.

"We thought of equipping everyone with an iPad instead of a laptop, but realized that users really needed a full laptop for some functions," Göth continues. "So we decided to go with laptops plus smartphones with mobile apps." Göth's team began developing Android apps for various key applications, starting with ERP and CRM. "We do most of the development work internally, but we have a partner who steps in to help us at times."

When the first apps were initially completed, Göth and his team distributed them by email blast. Then the team deployed a rudimentary app store solution on the corporate intranet but found that it was not user friendly and did not provide easy access to needed apps. "We quickly realized we needed a professional app store, so we began formally evaluating solutions," Göth remembers.

Göth's team ultimately chose Symantec App Center. "The solution's private-branded app store enables easy access to the enterprise apps that our team developed, as well as useful utilities such as document scanning," Goth says. "Users now have a central repository for all the apps they need."

IRSD's Hill expects that once Symantec Mobile Management is in place, he'll be able to provide educators with easy access to the apps that teachers find most useful district-wide. "I don't think we'll ever have a blacklist or a whitelist, but I'd like to have a list of recommended apps that can be posted internally for teachers to access as needed," Hill says. "This will expand the communication process

COMPANY PROFILES

FIRST TECH FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

FOUNDED: 2011
HEADQUARTERS: Palo Alto, California
MEMBERS: 355,000 served by 38 branches in 8 states
MERGER OF EQUALS: California's Addison Avenue Federal Credit Union and Oregon's First Tech Credit Union came together in 2011
WEBSITE: *www.firsttechfed.com*

HILTI CORPORATION

FOUNDED: 1941
HEADQUARTERS: Schaan, Liechtenstein
EMPLOYEES: 20,000+ worldwide
STORIED HISTORY: Global construction supplier started as Martin Hilti's mechanical workshop
WEBSITE: *www.hilti.com*

INDIAN RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT

FOUNDED: 1969
HEADQUARTERS: Selbyville, Delaware
STUDENT BODY: 8,670 students on 15 campuses covering 360 square miles
RECOGNIZED LEADERSHIP: Superintendent Susan Bunting was one of four finalists for the 2012 National Superintendent of the Year award sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators
WEBSITE: *www.irsd.net*

MICHAEL BRUNETTO

on what's working well beyond the campus level."

3. Improving access while maintaining security

Many enterprises involved in e-commerce and financial services are providing customers with mobile apps to access their accounts or conduct transactions. At the same time, internal employees sometimes have reason to access highly confidential financial data from a mobile device. "The more highly regulated industries are finding that authentication is key," says Braunberg.

First Tech Federal Credit Union is a member-owned financial services company that serves employees of technology companies with branches in California, Oregon, and six other states. "While our physical presence is mostly on the West Coast, our members are spread around the U.S. and the world, so they rely on mobile access to their accounts," explains Vice President, Chief Digital Officer, and Interim CIO Blanca Guerrero.

First Tech Federal is the result of one of the largest mergers in credit union history. The IT team pulled off the merger of financial and online banking systems—with only a few minor hiccups—over Memorial Day weekend in 2011. The 30-person IT staff is now split between the two legacy headquarters, in Palo Alto, California and Beaverton, Oregon. "This was a merger of equals, and we evaluated each application from both companies to see which would be best for the combined organization," Guerrero recalls.

Once the hard work of the merger was largely complete, Guerrero was able once again to don her chief digital officer hat and explore new mobile technologies that could be deployed for customers. "Our members currently have access to a Web application that's available through a mobile device," Guerrero explains, "but we're developing a new native banking application for iPhone and Android devices."

As is currently the case with Web banking, larger transactions conducted through the apps will go through an authentication process using tokens from Symantec Validation and ID Protection Service. "The Symantec authentication technology will be embedded in the new app, so that members can go through the process of validation without having to exit one application and enter another," explains Director of Information Security Rob McGee. "The transaction will be verified—which makes us and our members sleep better at night—and that verification will be very convenient."

4. Moving toward BYOD

One thing that motivates IT leaders to be strategic about a mobile app policy is an industry trend toward BYOD. "Having this data on hardware we don't own really complicates matters, so we designed our apps from day one with the assumption that they will be used on personal devices," explains Hilti's Göth. That decision was made in 2011 when Göth's team was formed, and a strategy for implementing BYOD was baked into the company's enterprise app strategy.

"All of our devices are still corporate-owned at this time, but we track them as BYOD devices in Symantec App Center," he explains. "Corporate apps and data are wrapped with a security layer that keeps them separate and protected. This enables us to have a very lenient policy on personal apps being installed—whether the device is corporate or personal."

Dr. Christoph Göth, Project Manager, Mobile Apps, Hilti Corporation

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When Hilti's BYOD policy is launched later this year, operations will not be affected during or after the transition, since applications are already being wrapped. "Being able to implement BYOD

OLIVER BARTENSCHLAGER

Blanca Guerrero, Vice President, Chief Digital Officer, and Interim CIO, First Tech Federal Credit Union

"We're developing a new native banking application for iPhone and Android devices."

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safely and easily is a huge advantage of Symantec App Center," Göth asserts.

First Tech has allowed personal devices to access corporate assets for several years, but each device must be vetted by the IT team. Once the device is verified as compatible with the company's security policies and its mobile messaging platform, users are allowed access to email, calendaring, and other functions that are available on corporate-owned devices. "Many of our users appreciate not having to carry two phones on them," says McGee.

5. Taking full advantage of cloud-based services

Mobile devices and apps are especially suited for cloud-based services, because an Internet connection is all that is needed to access them. "We're finding that mobility is driving a huge amount of interest in the cloud, and vice versa," Braunberg notes. "Someone who walks out of a sales meeting and has a 15-minute break can potentially photograph a handful of business cards, convert them to text, and upload them into a cloud-based CRM system."

At Hilti, it was the deployment of Web-based applications like SAP CRM 7.0 that triggered the launch of Göth's mobile apps program. "Moving into an always-on environment was really the catalyst for us, because we saw the potential in instant access for our sales people from anywhere," Göth observes.

Like most U.S. school districts, IRSD's administrators conduct periodic observations of each teacher in the classroom. Previously, most took handwritten notes of what they saw and transferred them into the district's cloud-based Observation 360 system after returning to their desks. Now, many administrators enter their notes directly into an iPad app while sitting in the classroom. "Lugging in a laptop felt intrusive in the classroom environment, so few administrators did this for observations," Hill remembers. "But iPads seem less distracting. It's a mental shift more than a functional one, but it's important, and it stretches the productivity of our busy administrators."

Plotting a strategy

As these IT leaders have attested, there are many potential benefits to embracing mobile apps, and tools and strategies are available that will help you protect your assets through the transition. The key is to tailor your strategies to the needs of your business. "Mobility is not an out-of-the-box solution for us," observes First Tech's Guerrero. "It has to be really connected to the needs of our members."

"You can't just throw a device in, post an app, and expect it to work," IRSD's Hill adds. "That just continues to add complexity to the environment without solving business problems. You've got to map IT to the needs of the business." ■

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