



iPhone: A Consumer Product in a Business World

The Apple iPhone was launched on June 29th, 2007. This marked Apple's introduction into the wireless phone market with a solution that is part phone, part iPod, and part Internet communicator. Analysts may not agree on what the market share of the iPhone will be after its debut, but they all agree that the hype has fueled a lot of consumer demand, and that the devices will inevitably show up in the corporate environment. When that happens, businesses need to be prepared – and it is best to prepare now before iPhones begin to show up in your business.

With new technologies, it is important that businesses have clear policies around their use. Policies on data security, remote access, and client data need to be clear and precise, as well as any legal or regulatory requirements to which your business may be held. These policies need to be communicated to all employees at regular intervals, and reviewed with any vendor who may come into contact with your data. If you do not have corporate policies around technology, it is imperative that you develop them before introducing any new technologies into your environment. Not doing so may have dire consequences for your business. An All Covered consultant can sit down with you to help you plan and execute your policies.

Specifically with the iPhone, it is important to know some facts about the product before anyone decides to use it as a business tool. First and foremost, it is essential to understand that the iPhone is a consumer product not a business product. It was not designed with security or business productivity as its number-one focus, and as such, will impact the security of any data that is on it. It does not have a "remote-wipe" feature in the event of theft, and it cannot be centrally administered or de-activated from your business. Using the device for corporate email can potentially impact regulatory and legal compliance for your company.

Secondly, because the iPhone is not centered on productivity, its email features are not designed with the corporate email infrastructure in mind. It currently does not natively sync up with Exchange and there is no enterprise email connectivity other than IMAP and POP3. It can view Microsoft Word, Excel and PDF documents, but it does not have the ability to edit them. It does have the ability to sync calendar and contact data from Outlook, but it has to be physically connected to your computer to do so – there is no push of calendar or contact data from Outlook or Exchange, as with RIM's Blackberry. Outlook Web Access and SharePoint can be browsed from the web interface, but the full extent of functionality is not known at the moment.

If your business utilizes web 2.0 applications, the iPhone will support them. Many web-based applications will work on the iPhone, unless they utilize Flash or Java for content. In addition, the iPhone can sync your bookmarks if you are using Apple's Safari web browser. Previews of the phone haven't yet touted an instant messaging client

like Yahoo's Instant Messenger, Apple's iChat or AOL Instant Messenger, but the device does support SMS. It is important to note that AT&T is the only service provider available for the iPhone, and in some areas, has a poor reputation for coverage. In addition, AT&T's standard Internet service EDGE, is slower than other provider's 3G networks, but a future iPhone model will be able to exploit AT&T's newer, much faster data network, which is now available in 160 cities.

Apple's history of industry-changing innovation will continue in the handheld/phone market. The full-featured web browser, touch screen user interface, and elegant integration of phone and data features will raise the bar for all phone vendors. Apple clearly didn't set out to design the world's best handheld Exchange client, or to have the best possible features of integrating to a Windows network. They did set out to re-define what a handheld phone/browser could be, and they seem to be aiming it at consumers, not businesses. It's very likely that some of your employees will be getting personal iPhones, and then asking you to help integrate those into your office network. You need to understand the issues, and decide how much you're willing to open your network to this new technology.

So what can you expect from All Covered?

Contact us now about how an iPhone can fit within your IT infrastructure before you buy one or one shows up among your staff. An All Covered consultant can help you determine the best way to use the iPhone features without compromising your organization's policies if you deem it necessary to utilize the iPhone in your organization. Lastly, check for the latest iPhone information from Apple at: <http://www.apple.com/iphone/>.

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