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netFRONT

Mac vs. PC, business edition >

Executive Summary:

Businesses find PCs convenient and Macs safe and reliable. The choice is yours.

By Janeson Keeley

In May 2011, Electronista.com reported, "In business, Mac shipments grew about

66 percent in the first quarter of 2011 where the total PC market advanced 4.5 percent. Apple now had three percent of corporate PCs [single-user computers], a figure it hadn't seen since spring 1997."

Why have Microsoft Windows-based PCs dominated the business world? Why is the Mac making significant inroads?

Network engineer Brian Brindle of Roanoke suggests that a significant reason businesses use PCs rather than Macs is that "there are numerous [business] software packages that run only on Windows ... with no viable alternatives on the Mac."

Brindle also notes that companies such as Dell and IBM will custom-build and load software on multiple computers for a corporation so that they are identical, making set-up and maintenance easier.

In terms of corporate service, Apple falls short. According to Apple.com, the only programs that Apple will preload for business customers are iWork (a program similar to Microsoft Office) and its creative software: Aperture (a photo editing program), Final Cut Express (for video editing), and Logic Express (pro music creation software).

However, in terms of running Windows software, a virtual machine can be installed on the Mac that will allow it to run other operating systems, including Windows.

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have a Mac, but with the ability to install Windows on a Mac, that has diminished somewhat," observes Rob Underwood, the Mac specialist at Two Robs Inc. in Roanoke. He believes that this change is a result of the popularity of the iPhone and iPad. "A lot of corporate IT departments are being forced to support these devices, and the Macs that can come with them," he says.

Macs may also be finding their way into corporate offices because they are more reliable. "Windows is a good general operating system," says Rob Miles, the PC specialist at Two Robs, "and is designed to please as many people as possible. That leads to problems with compatibility ... The user gets more freedom, but that does mean they have to sacrifice a little reliability at times."

Security is another factor. While doing research last year, Lizetta Staplefoote, senior copywriter at Rackspace Hosting in

Blacksburg, found that "Macs are thought to be safer because the user base is far smaller than PCs, so when hackers are writing viruses, they tend to focus on PC attacks." She thinks that "as Macs gain popularity, that will probably change."

Underwood believes reliability and security are related and he says that's the major advantage that Macs have over PCs. "There are very few security threats that can affect a Mac," he reports.

It seems likely that PCs will continue to dominate the workplace, even as Macs grow more popular, but Brindle advises businesses to remember: "A computer is a tool and the recommendation has to be about giving the person the right tool to do their job." 

This is the first in a two part series. Next month: PC vs. Mac: Getting personal.



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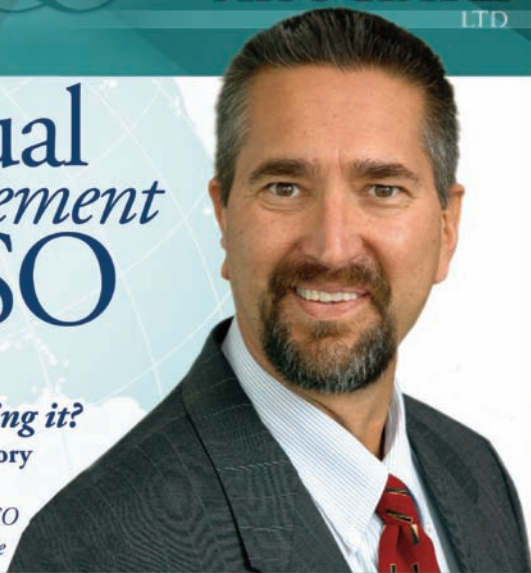
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