



David Aires
General Manager, Intel IT Operations

Moving to the leading edge of the change wave

We are in an era of unprecedented change. An era where people's desires have gained tremendous influence. An era focused more on experiences than devices. And it is changing the very nature and role of Intel IT.

Let me explain.

What computing has done for productivity over the past several decades is astounding. Email, for example, revolutionized business efficiency. It dramatically accelerated conversations, processes, and outcomes. And it forever altered the business landscape.

While email was a forerunner, there has been a constant stream of new tools, new capabilities, and new possibilities.

In many ways, consumer technologies have outpaced business technologies, dramatically altering the sphere of influence and innovation.

IT organizations have a choice to make: Resist this ongoing trend (a risky proposition) or embrace it. Intel IT has embraced these changes, and it is driving us to be more flexible and responsive to the individuals and departments we support.

In the past, IT organizations were often the last to upgrade, the follower of trends. But today, many IT teams are moving to the leading edge of the change wave. Instead of simply supporting change, we have an opportunity to drive it. In doing so, we become more relevant, more influential, and more impactful.

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The consumerization of IT

IT organizations used to have two main responsibilities. First, give each employee a standard computer, a set of business applications, and a network to connect them. And second, keep the systems running and fix problems as they arise.

Not long ago, however, employees started demanding the devices and capabilities to which they had access in their home lives. They wanted to use their smartphones for work purposes, helping them stay connected and productive anytime, anywhere. We implemented a BYOD program three years ago, and some 55 percent of our approximately 45,000 current mobile devices are employee owned.

Our response to these requests wasn't just good for employees; it was also good for business. Allowing individuals to "have it their way" increased productivity and allowed us to keep costs down. It also opened our eyes to the impact and benefits of the consumerization of IT.

Today, we are proactively enabling this shift. We are aggressively deploying new devices that blur the lines between home and work computing. People want devices that are thin, light, and mobile, with the latest interfaces and capabilities. To accommodate them, we have distributed nearly 14,000 touch-enabled Ultrabooks™ to our workforce in 2013, one of our biggest accomplishments this year.

Benefits beyond productivity

In addition to enabling greater productivity, this shift is having a remarkable and largely unexpected effect. We are helping consumer technologies become more enterprise friendly.

As we deploy these newer devices internally, we act as a vital test bed and closed loop feedback system for our partners who manufacture the products. We're able to acquire real time usage information and user feedback that leads directly—and quickly—to product enhancements. This makes Intel IT fairly unique in the industry.

In testing and validating the latest products in a real world business setting,

we are speeding up the evolution of client computing, helping manufacturers create products that are more mobile, more flexible, and more capable of supporting both consumer and business needs.

Enablement via hybrid cloud

We're not solely focused on client devices, of course. We are also actively evolving our data center strategies and the infrastructure systems that support them. In our office and enterprise computing environment, we have virtualized roughly 85 percent of our operating system instances, creating more flexibility, reducing costs, and optimizing resource utilization. Virtualization has also allowed us to move aggressively toward a cloud model.

We view the cloud as the most efficient way to deliver applications and services, and have built a robust private cloud that has greatly improved our ability to develop, deploy, and manage them. We are now moving toward a hybrid cloud model that allows us to tap external cloud resources in addition to our own internal cloud. Doing so will enable us to scale at a moment's notice and better serve the continually evolving needs of the business.

While the consumerization of IT and the move to hybrid clouds are distinct trends, they are largely interrelated. In fact, they are fueling one another. As individuals demand seamless computing experiences from a variety of mobile devices, the cloud is both the conduit and the enabler. It is the hub to which a growing number of spokes are attached.

These trends are changing our paradigm and our mindset. We have become more responsive and service oriented. We understand individuals need different things to optimize their productivity. And we realize more choice equals more productivity, higher satisfaction, and invaluable feedback—which can be used to improve our products and services, and those of our partners.

Intel IT is on the leading edge of these changes. And we couldn't be more excited about it.

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