

# Managing the application environment

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Mobility is changing the way we work, the way we live and the way we play. The introduction of the smartphone in 2007 radically altered consumers' expectations of what could be accomplished while on the go. Hundreds of millions of smartphones have been sold since then, and virtually everyone has one.

It is not just consumers that have felt the impact of mobility, enterprises have felt it too. They have been under increasing pressure from users to expand the range of mobile devices they allow to access the enterprise network, and with it, the plethora of applications stored there.

## Challenges

Today's enterprise is getting more and more mobile, and apps are being introduced to allow for easier access of information for employees, and for customers, products and services. The mobility phenomenon, over and above the numerous benefits it provides, has also brought with it a myriad challenges, such as how to manage and secure outside devices that are connecting to the network, and how to manage, integrate and maintain all the company's applications.

As employees increasingly use their own devices for work, businesses need to decide which devices are allowed, and formulate policies for their use. Any enterprise mobility strategy also needs to bear in mind the design, building, integration and management of mobile applications too. This is no easy task given the wide range of devices available, a range that is widening on a daily basis. iOS remains popular, and Android goes from strength to strength, not to mention the other available platforms.

## Maintaining an app

The cost of developing and maintaining apps grows with the number of platforms that need to be supported. Moreover, the sheer number of apps and their associated complexity is removing control from the enterprise, as they are designed by third party developers.

Bear in mind that although creating and managing a single app on a sole platform isn't too difficult, in a native environment, creating and managing it across many different platforms, and for dozens of different apps, is a whole new kettle of fish.

All applications these days need to support multiple platforms and form factors, and be continually maintained, upgraded and even improved. They must be secure and they need to have access to content and back-end systems.

## Enabling capabilities

Any platform used to manage an enterprise's mobile application environment must have several capabilities. A good solution will address all the issues faced by businesses when developing and managing mobile applications. This should include enabling mobile apps to be created for multiple platforms, managed and maintained in-house consistently, leveraging in-house resources and upgrading quickly and efficiently.

This is where a solution such as IBM Worklight comes in. Worklight is a mobile application platform (MAP), software which enables cross platform app development and maintenance. The solution enables companies to develop, connect, run and manage mobile applications across different device platforms and form factors.

## ABOUT GERALD NAIDOO

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