



SPEAKERS' CORNER

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The recent news that Samsung has overtaken Apple in smartphone shipments demonstrates the continued emergence of Android as the operating system of choice - a development that will be keenly watched by companies active in the enterprise workforce management space, particularly those searching for evidence that this demand is reflected among businesses.

In the past, Microsoft Windows mobile operating systems provided the most credible enterprise platform for workforce management workflow solutions on mobile devices. But with increasing interest in alternative platform solutions driven by high levels of consumer take-up, it is worth considering the part that Android and Apple could play in the enterprise space while they are still relatively immature in their growth.



Is the mobile workforce moving towards Android?

On the surface, both have intuitive user interfaces albeit Android is available on a broader range of devices than that of Apple. For service organisations with large numbers of employees working remotely in the field, simplicity of data

capture is very important, which is where intelligent UIs have a place. However, with capacitive touchscreens their conduciveness to some field service environments is questionable, in which it wouldn't be wrong to assume

that impatient button prodding is an everyday occurrence and a delicate touch absent.

What then about data security? Apple's iOS is relatively secure due to the company's approach to application development.

these operating systems, it's hard to deny Microsoft's full commitment to this space. The Windows Embedded Partner Programme (WEPP) established by Microsoft is responsible for ongoing product support, the development of a product



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However, this brings its own challenges, with mobile workforce management (MWM) providers having the right level of access to provide complex real-time mobile solutions for customers. Android's approach is much more open to third-party applications but this has made it the number one target for malware authors, according to recent research from security firm Kaspersky. These are not insurmountable challenges but they do need to be considered carefully by anyone wishing to adopt these as enterprise platforms for MWM applications.

Ultimately, and despite the rapid increase and success of

roadmap and ensuring that the needs of the enterprise handheld device space are met.

Microsoft has also committed to support its current release, Windows Embedded 6.5 to 2019, giving anyone investing in a solution the security of support well over the expected life of any devices they may buy. Microsoft is also expected to launch Windows 8 in 2012 as a new multi-platform operating system supporting the full range of devices from the desktop to the tablet and handheld. In essence, there is little doubt Windows products will continue to play a critical role in enabling mobility. ”