

Business Plus Article – March 2006 Mobile Management

These days, the latest and greatest mobile phones make the perfect fashion accessory. They look, sound and feel great. You can have the Crazy Frog ring tone and a Burberry case for your Nokia or your Sony Ericsson. The possibilities appear to be endless. But other than annoying all and sundry with their ring tone, how can these all-singing all-dancing handsets actually make the mobile worker more productive?

When Microsoft released Service Pack 2 for Exchange 2003, it very much had the mobile worker in mind. In particular, the integration of PDA's and mobile phones with Exchange is something it's keen to promote. With that in mind, SP2, coupled with Microsoft's new Messaging and Security Feature Pack for mobile devices, introduces a wealth of new features that it hopes will help it compete with the current leader in this market: the Blackberry.

For the uninitiated, the Blackberry is a mobile device that is a kind of amalgamation of a mobile phone and a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA). It can provide the user instant access to their email, contacts, and other business information. Historically, the Blackberry has been very strong in the business sector. This is not only due to its strong branding and marketing; it also makes use of a form of "push technology" which effectively keeps the mobile device completely up to date with little or no intervention from the user. When a new email arrives, it is forwarded to the Blackberry. Conversely, previous generations of Microsoft's Exchange Server relied on a request *from* the mobile device to then offer the new email for download. This meant either manually running or scheduling an automatic "send and receive" on the device which could only be done at 5 minute intervals. Apart from the relative inconvenience of this, it also resulted in wasted bandwidth as the device checked for new content when there was none available. With Exchange SP2 and MSFP (Messaging and Security Feature Pack), Microsoft has introduced its own Direct Push Technology. Without going into the technicalities, this technology means immediate delivery of Exchange data to the mobile device. This includes emails, calendar, contact, and task information. This data is delivered securely over an encrypted HTTPS connection ensuring safe communication and total privacy. All this comes with added benefit of a familiar user interface; Windows Mobile v5 devices use an email client that looks and feels just like the ubiquitous Microsoft Outlook client.

Of course with all this convenience there comes in inherent risk. What would happen if a phone was left on a train or stolen from a car? With these devices potentially containing a wealth of confidential data, should they fall into the wrong hands it could be catastrophic. Microsoft has tackled this with another new feature in SP2 and MSFP: Remote Device Wipe. This technology allows the device to be effectively flattened should it become compromised or lost and works in two different ways: If

the compromised device was left on with no lock or password, a remote command can be sent from the Exchange server that will wipe the device in seconds. If, on the other hand, the device was compromised or lost whilst locked, the device will not be able to perform any operation other than to receive the remote wipe notification and report that it has been wiped.

So what do you need to make use of this new technology? Two of the main ingredients are Microsoft Exchange Server with Service Pack 2 and a Windows Mobile v5 device that is running the Messaging and Security Feature Pack. Some of the very latest Windows Mobile v5 devices are being shipped with MSFP preinstalled. Some of the older WMv5 devices can be updated by a device specific MSFP installation.

With Exchange SP2 and the Messaging and Security Feature Pack, Microsoft is making working on the move a more convenient and secure experience. As more and more mobile device vendors adopt the Microsoft operating systems, the future is bright for the mobile worker.

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