

Deploy Managed IT Services in a Mixed Mac and Windows Environment

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In brief

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Windows has been a personal favorite of businesses for a long time. They are cheaper than Apple products and are easy to set up once you know what you are doing. But times have changed, and users of Apple Mac devices increase every day. As a result, you might have seen an advantage or two that made you wonder how you can incorporate the two in your workplace.

While this is possible, it is going to be a challenge. That is why you need to spend good bucks to get an IT support company. There are more about the benefits of hiring IT support services. It is unlikely that you would be trying to integrate Windows in a predominantly Mac environment. Most likely, you would be integrating Mac devices into a Windows environment.

But before this can be done, you might want to consider factors such as:

1. The number of devices to be deployed: You should consider yourself lucky because Macs are easier to integrate into dual environments because of the toolset of available software. A handful of Mac devices might not be much of a challenge, but with a mega business with fifty devices or more, things would get more interesting.
2. The type of access needed: "What would Windows users do when connected to my system? What would Mac users do when connected to my system?" These questions give you an idea of the type of access needed for each device type in your mixed environment.
3. Tools currently used by the business: There is a fundamental difference between Windows and Apple operating systems. This also affects how the software on each device type is written. Knowing the tools currently used by your business lets you understand which ones are compatible. Then you can make changes as needed. You can see that a lot goes into setting up mixed environments. A number of service providers for the managed IT services.

Integrating Mac in a Windows Environment

Use of Third-Party Tools

It is well known that it is now easier to integrate Macs with an active directory and command support. But there are times when third-party tools are necessary to ensure management runs smoothly. This is done by applying your Mac to the AD domains. Once this is done, you can easily send commands to the Mac client using Apple Remote Desktop.

There is always more than one way to get a task done with Apple. You can also use the device's system to your advantage. To do that, you would have to set up a Mac OS X server first. Once that is done, the policies must be set based on the AD groups. This can be easily done with Apple's profile manager. At its core, it works by configuring your OD (open directory) domain to work with the AD service. All these come together to make the job easier.

The step above works because the active directory processes computation has to deal with Windows. In contrast, processes occurring on Mac's end are handled by the OS X Server and the Open Directory. But it is often a better choice to treat your Mac as a standalone device. What we mean by this is that you should only look for ways to integrate them into the enterprise when it is necessary. Aside from that, use them as a separate device.

Manage Mac Like a Mobile Device

Apple is well known for its ability to control devices from different points, and it seems like they have been prioritizing mobile device management (MDM). This is important because the same management tools can be used across various devices, including Android and Windows. In addition, the MDM framework gives IT administrators accessibility like never before. Airplay sessions, for example, can be quickly initiated, which means that enterprise applications can be pushed seamlessly to the Mac.

Incorporate Mac into Ad Domain

Of course, most IT administrators would love to skip the extra time taken with alternative methods and integrate their Macs into an AD environment. Admittedly, it is possible, but only to a certain degree. It is all thanks to OS X. Since this OS update, Macs, like Windows, now have the prerequisite to run AD and other directory services.

The process of joining Mac to a domain can be done relatively quickly. Of course, to do this, you would need the credentials of the domain and necessary system access. When you join the domain, an object of the computer is automatically created in AD by Windows Server.

An alternative method for incorporating your Mac to AD is Microsoft's System Center Configuration Manager or SCCM. With a program like this, you can enroll any macOS client from your Windows device and set up support as needed. Settings can also be easily deployed, and quick check-ups of the hardware inventory used by macOS clients.

There are so many things SCCM can do when managing a mixed environment. Still, unlike Apple, you must understand that Windows is not so concerned about compatibility with other operating systems. This means you will always get more out of Apple enterprise.

There are certain things to look into if you would be using SCCM.

- You would be communicating with the Mac device just like an internet-based client. So, a configuration manager site server is crucial. The domain name also must be certified.
- Before you can enroll a macOS client in SCCM, your enrolment and proxy point needs to be configured. The same goes for client management and the custom client settings.

Final Thoughts

Setting up a mixed environment where Mac and Windows function seamlessly can be challenging. But if pulled off the right way, work efficiency could increase tremendously. Hopefully, this article gives you an idea of how it works. That said, seeking help from professionals could be the better option.

References

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