Enhancing BlackBerry Management with AirWatch

AirWatch Integration with BlackBerry Enterprise Server

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Introduction

Market Overview

In the corporate setting, the BlackBerry® OS dominated the mobile scene for nearly a decade. In the security conscious workforce, BlackBerry’s ability to offer secure syncing of corporate email, calendars, and instant messages made this OS unparalleled. The BlackBerry® Enterprise Server (BES), a built in feature on the phone, protected corporate data by encrypting it.

Over the years, BlackBerry has continued to offer and expand the security features that made it the powerhouse of the workforce. However, what has changed is the climate of the mobile market. The debut of the Apple iOS and the Google Android directly impacted the corporate mobile device world. The workforce desired a similar user experience from their corporate phones as these rabidly popular personal devices.

The one factor that limited the immediate full-scale implementation of these devices in the workforce is that, unlike the BlackBerry, neither of these operating systems provided built in enterprise servers. Essentially, these new smartphones did not have the capability to encrypt and protect corporate data.

AirWatch rose as an answer to the question of security; facilitating the corporate presence of Android and iOS phones by providing a secure enterprise server. However, the benefits of enrolling in the AirWatch Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution are not limited to the Android and iOS platforms. There are also advantages for companies using the BlackBerry.

These advantages are tied to the multi-vendor corporate device market. The workforce now expects for their devices to do more in terms of a tailored user experience. A study conducted by an AirWatch affiliate reported that almost half of the employees polled were using their personal devices to access corporate data, effectively consumerizing enterprise mobility. The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) model developed as the most efficient and cost-effective way for employers to equip their employees with the devices that work best for them.

AirWatch allows employers to take advantage of this BYOD model by empowering and securing personal devices for business use. This is an advantage for businesses currently implementing BlackBerry devices, because it sets employers up for future multiple-device scalability that securely serves the needs of the employees. Additionally, integration with AirWatch simplifies and streamlines the administrative console experience.

This document outlines these advantages in full detail. It is most useful for employers:

- Currently implementing single threaded BlackBerry device plans
- Implementing multiple OS, including BlackBerry
- Interested in preparing for the future
- Curious about how AirWatch can benefit their company
The AirWatch Advantage

AirWatch is a Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution that when integrated with BES provides three key advantages to companies who currently employ the BES solution:

Multi-Platform Support

AirWatch is the only MDM that can support any OS on the market. This provides a huge advantage for you in terms of preparing your business for the mobile future. In the past, the BlackBerry was the only device targeted towards the enterprise. However, with the rise of the multi-vendor market, devices that were once strictly personal are now being developed in a way that gears them for the enterprise. Apple iOS and select Android vendors are all building out enterprise ready devices and APIs specifically tailored for the workforce. This new development makes the implementation of multiple devices, and specifically BYOD deployments, the most cost-effective way to securely outfit employees with the devices that best help them do their jobs.

AirWatch does not intend to replace BES for Blackberry smartphones; rather BES integration with AirWatch facilitates preparation for diversified mobile growth of your company. Even if your company currently implements a single-threaded BlackBerry deployment, integrating with AirWatch positions your company for transition into the multiple-platform, BYOD future.

Simplified BlackBerry Management

In comparison to a standalone BES application, integration with AirWatch equips you with a more intuitive experience in the entire Console; specifically in the Dashboard and Control Panel.

Console

AirWatch provides a centralized device management solution. In contrast, the BES console lacks graphical displays of the device fleet. As Administrator, you are required to weed through information about the individual devices in order gain information about the device fleet. AirWatch provides simplified BlackBerry management by centralizing all devices in an intuitive, rich User Interface (UI). This HTML5 web interface provides easy navigation of the Admin Console from anywhere in the world, at a workstation or from a device. It also allows you to check the status of the entire fleet using graphs.

Some key management features of the console include the capacity for you to clear passcode, perform a lock or wipe (enterprise/full) remotely, take remote control of BlackBerry devices for troubleshooting, send customizable messages to end users, and remove corporate settings, access and apps after un-enrollment.
Dashboard

As soon as AirWatch integrates with the BES server, all devices become visible in the AirWatch Dashboard, including those smartphones managed before AirWatch integration, providing you with top level management of the device fleet. This data is graphically summarized at the top of the page, providing you with an intuitive reader experience. Rather than reviewing each device individually, the AirWatch Dashboard expedites the process for you by providing a visual summary of all phones enrolled in the console. This feature gains increasing importance as mobile fleets grow in scale.

Asset Tracking

The dashboard graphically displays information about your entire device fleet, regardless of platform.

Control Panel

Another distinguishing feature is that the AirWatch Control Panel allows you to drill down, and access detailed information about individual devices as the Administrator. In contrast, the BES Administrator must navigate through the console, and pull information from different tabs throughout the page in order to access information about specific devices.

Additionally, the Control Panel allows you to take administrative action over the air (OTA). This feature is particularly attractive as it gives you remote access and control over all devices in their fleet on an individual and group basis.

One practical example of the functionality of OTA abilities in the Control Panel is the BlackBerry password reset. This feature allows you to take remote security action on devices. Integrating with AirWatch provides the ability to secure compromised BlackBerry devices OTA. In contrast, the BES console requires that the Administrator know the device password before taking remote action to secure compromised devices. The AirWatch advantage is that you can secure any device via the Control Panel, instead of limiting protection to those devices that the Administrator knows the password to.
Tiered Management
Another attractive feature of BES integration with AirWatch is that you can create a tiered management structure of BlackBerry Administrators. Enterprises can maintain control of all mobile assets at a global level while empowering IT Administrators to maintain visibility and control of devices under their particular location or department. This multi-tenancy is a benefit because it allows for specialization of administrative roles within the console. This feature prevents the creation of management policies that are too loose or too restrictive in addition to saving thousands of wasted man hours individually creating management policies for each device.

Streamlined BES Activation

The AirWatch integrated BES activation process streamlines the traditional BES registration experience. With AirWatch, you are able to register devices in bulk as an Administrator, or end users are able to register themselves. The AirWatch way provides you with an activation process that could not be more simplified.

Automated Deployment of BES Activation Notifications

Through AirWatch, the deployment of BES activation notifications is automated, removing the possibility of human error and saving you untold man hours. The traditional standalone BES administrative experience involves individually registering each device in the server, assigning a numeric token, and then manually emailing the individually assigned token to the end user. Through AirWatch, you are able to automate deployment notifications by sending the numeric tokens to end users using look up values in the system settings, significantly enhancing your administrative BES experience.

End-User BES Registration

BES integration with AirWatch also creates the capacity for end-user BES registration. Enrolling users in the non-integrated BES server requires each device to have a numeric token manually entered in a multiple step process. AirWatch simplifies BES registration by facilitating end-user registration. In this process, the end user goes to the self-service portal, enters basic information, and registers themselves. This BES registration procedure does not require facilitation by the Administrator, and is a truly simplified experience for you.

Migrating Your BlackBerry

With AirWatch, end-users can easily migrate from their BlackBerry to another device, making your transition from a single-threaded BlackBerry deployment to a BYOD strategy completely seamless. AirWatch removes the tedium of manual reconfiguration from the equation for you. Rather than losing important corporate information when switching operating systems, integration with AirWatch facilitates seamless vacillation from OS to OS through profiles that are pushed down to devices via the console. This eliminates the need for you to manually enter a new profile into the new device preserving contact, email, and calendar information.
Preparing for Migration
Preparing to migrate from a BlackBerry to another platform does not alter the end users experience. Rather, consumers can enjoy uninterrupted usage of their BlackBerry smartphones independent of their migration plans. As soon as AirWatch integrates with BES, all existing devices are imported into the Admin Console for management. Post-integration you have the capacity to centrally manage all devices in the Console as the Administrator, regardless of platform. The multi-platform structure of the Admin Console sets devices up for seamless migration to any device. Furthermore, you can prepare profiles, applications, and content in anticipation of users migrating to other platforms without effecting ongoing BlackBerry support. This is extremely advantageous as all preparatory actions are completely discretionery and can be tailored to fit the unique needs of your company.

Enrolling a New Device
As soon as an end-user decides that they are ready for a new device, they can go through AirWatch’s intuitive enrollment process to easily regain all corporate content and get their device up to speed. Enrollment involves simply navigating to a URL on their device and authenticating it with their existing corporate credentials via LDAP. Once enrolled, AirWatch will immediately push down all of the existing corporate configurations like Wi-Fi, VPN, and email to a device. Simultaneously, the new device will receive corporate security policies for passcodes and device level encryption. Enrollment of a new device is a simple process that preserves all important corporate content while seamlessly connecting the new device to key functionality for secure management.

Managing and Monitoring All Devices
Once configured, migration is complete. The new device will immediately start to regularly communicate with the AirWatch Admin Console, and it will begin to periodically send asset information back to the AirWatch Admin Console where it will be monitored for compliance and threat management. This allows for central management and monitoring of all devices, BlackBerry as well as other platforms, until retirement. This is how integration with AirWatch sets you up for seamless migration and multi-platform device management.