

Does Bring Your Own Device equal the death of face-to-face communication?



Thorsten Freitag, 2012-23-07

It used to be the case that the time and place for a meeting was fixed in advance and you could guarantee that the person you were meeting would turn up, without the need for several location updates and participant changes in the preceding days – sometime hours.

In almost every industry, the event dynamic has changed too. Evenings were normally given over to sociable chit-chat over a glass of red wine

In events like CeBIT, right when mobile phones started to catch on, those that had bought into this particular technology would lug around something the size of a hotel safe, radiating importance. I well remember my first cell phone, of which I was proud as punch. It had an enormous aerial and the device was so large that it covered my entire face during the conversation.

Mobile technology as we know it today became available and affordable to the mass market in around the late 1990s and the early part of this century. Today, technology has made huge inroads into our social and business lives. Information is fed to us via smartphone, laptop or tablet, emails are accessed and checked quickly and easily, orders can be quickly tapped into the system.

These days, when I look around me at trade fairs and events, it's rare to find anyone who doesn't possess a smartphone, tablet, mobile phone or other communications gadget. We're always online and accessible.

But sometimes I see people less than three metres away from each other emailing each other. People call me on the phone even though I'm at the same event. Is face-to-face communication dying? Does the future consist of personal conversation webcasts, conference calls and email flood?

Well, maybe that's a bit pessimistic because, ultimately, technology has been a force for good in so many ways. We can do more things given the same time. For me, the main advantage is flexibility. My role means I spend an awful lot of time travelling. I have very little opportunity to sit at a fixed workplace. My smartphone is my constant companion; to keep me up-to-date of course, but - more importantly - to take care of business-related issues throughout the day. For that, being able to access business applications is critical – without that my smartphone loses a lot of its usefulness.

It's important to assess the balance between the time you spend in the virtual and in-person world. From my experience in sales, I'd say that customers will choose to forgo the absolute best product in favour of working with a company that advises and personally cares for the customer. With F5, I'm bound also to say that you get both these things - so I'm looking forward to an exciting and personal conversation next time we meet in the real world.

F5 Networks, Inc. | 401 Elliot Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119 | 888-882-4447 | f5.com

F5 Networks, Inc.
Corporate Headquarters
info@f5.com

F5 Networks
Asia-Pacific
apacinfo@f5.com

F5 Networks Ltd.
Europe/Middle-East/Africa
emeainfo@f5.com

F5 Networks
Japan K.K.
f5j-info@f5.com