ESG SHOWCASE

Supporting and Empowering the New Workplace: What to Look for in a PC Platform

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ABSTRACT: IT teams across the U.K. are under growing pressure to support the hybrid workplace and deliver a productive, seamless, and collaborative experience to users everywhere they are located. One of the most important investments organisations can make is in a PC platform that meets user and organisational needs for productivity, comprehensive security, manageability, and fleet stability. This ESG Showcase focuses on the key features and capabilities a PC platform should include and examines the specific benefits of Intel vPro in helping IT professionals support and empower the modern workplace.

PC Platform Strategy

The shift to hybrid work is shining a bright new spotlight on the importance and value of using a business PC platform to strengthen productivity, security, manageability, and stability. What used to be a technology approach that was most applicable to midsize or large enterprises is now a consideration for any organisation with a fleet of commercial PCs managed by IT professionals. There are a variety of reasons why a PC platform is business-critical to more organisations in today's highly dispersed computing environment. These include:

- **User Experience/Productivity:** More people are working remotely or in hybrid environments. They must be remotely onboarded and serviced by IT teams. They need high performance, comprehensive security protections, advanced collaboration capabilities, enhanced audio/visual/connectivity and a seamless, stable experience. In this new world of work, user experience has become priority number one for many organisations.

- **IT Efficiency:** IT teams are not just supporting more remote workers; they are often working remotely themselves. They need to support users without the benefit of a physical deskside visit. They need an efficient way to monitor, update, and troubleshoot multiple devices without physically handling those devices. They need to support users wherever they are located and whatever connectivity options they are using—inside or outside of firewalls, using a wired LAN connection or a wireless LAN Wi-Fi connection, with out-of-band connectivity that allows for persistent connection to remote devices for remediation, patches, and updates.

- **Security:** Security has never been more important—or challenging. Adversaries are targeting remote and at-home workers, and the rise of ransomware has been particularly devastating. With a modern business PC platform, IT and cybersecurity teams can utilise hardware security features that protect and can assist in detecting ransomware and supply chain attacks before they can do serious damage.

- **Technology Innovation:** Intel vPro has been around for more than 15 years and receives constant updates to address changing market conditions. It now utilises 12th Gen Intel Core Processors with enhanced capabilities aimed at improving security, performance, management, and stability. This makes Intel vPro more essential when managing

fleets of business PCs. It is also an efficient platform, delivering a valuable total cost of ownership when considering longevity, productivity gains, security savings, and IT manageability.
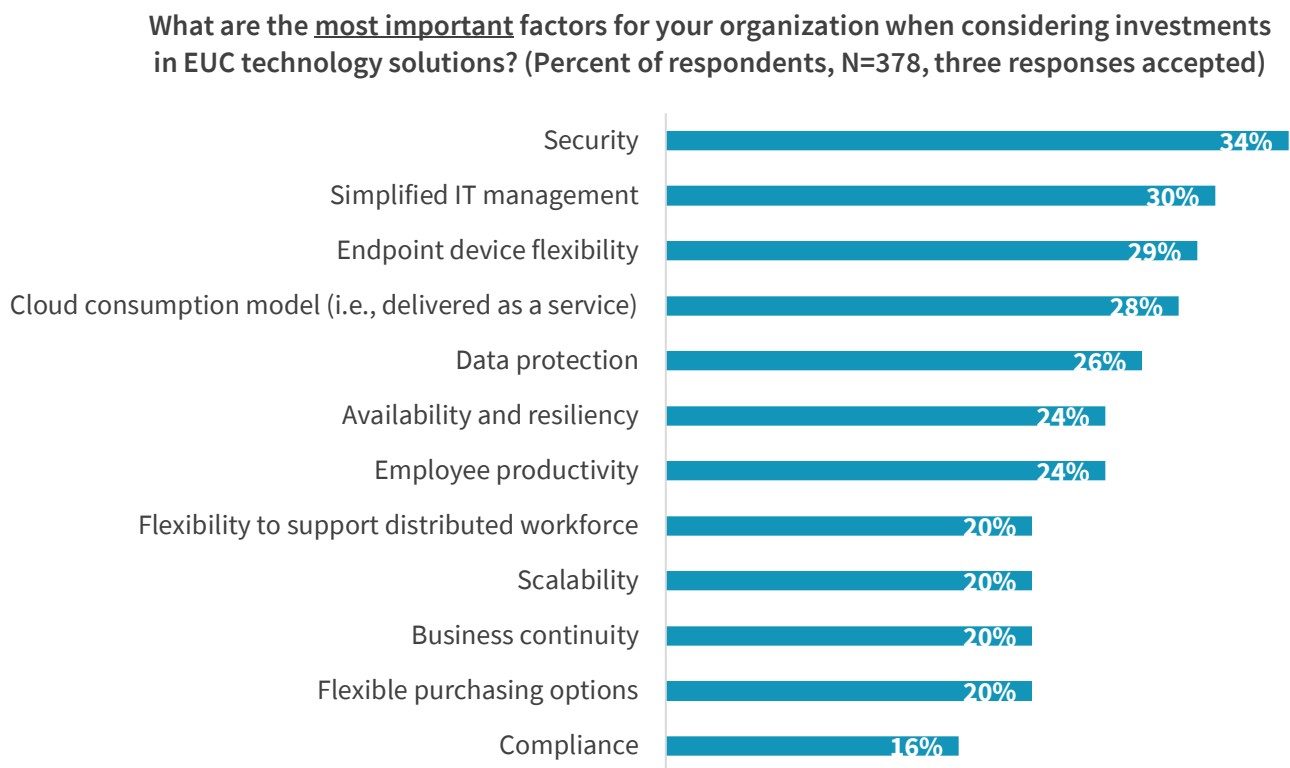
This ESG Showcase addresses the changing workplace and the impact it is having on how organisations in the U.K. are deploying and managing end-user devices, including the need for IT teams to deliver a great experience to users in any location. We discuss the value of a business PC platform that enables enhanced performance, advanced security protections, and control over fleet management. Finally, we look at the specific benefits of the Intel vPro platform in helping IT pros support and empower the modern workplace.

New Workplace, New Priorities

Remote and hybrid work are now facts of life for many organisations in the U.K. Businesses that can offer more flexibility to workers have the potential to create a competitive advantage in hiring and retaining talent. They can improve economic value and increase productivity if they empower their workers with the right tools and technologies. In this environment, more than ever, focusing on end-user experience, productivity, performance, security, and IT operational efficiency have become clear imperatives for any organisation with a fleet of PCs.

According to an ESG research survey, respondents from across the globe cited the importance of security (34%), simplified IT management (30%), endpoint device flexibility (29%), employee productivity (24%), and flexibility to support a distributed workforce (20%) as among the most important factors for their organisations when considering investments in end-user computing technology solutions (see Figure 1).[1]

Figure 1. The Importance of Security, Manageability, Flexibility, and Employee Productivity

What are the <u>most important</u> factors for your organization when considering investments in EUC technology solutions? (Percent of respondents, N=378, three responses accepted)

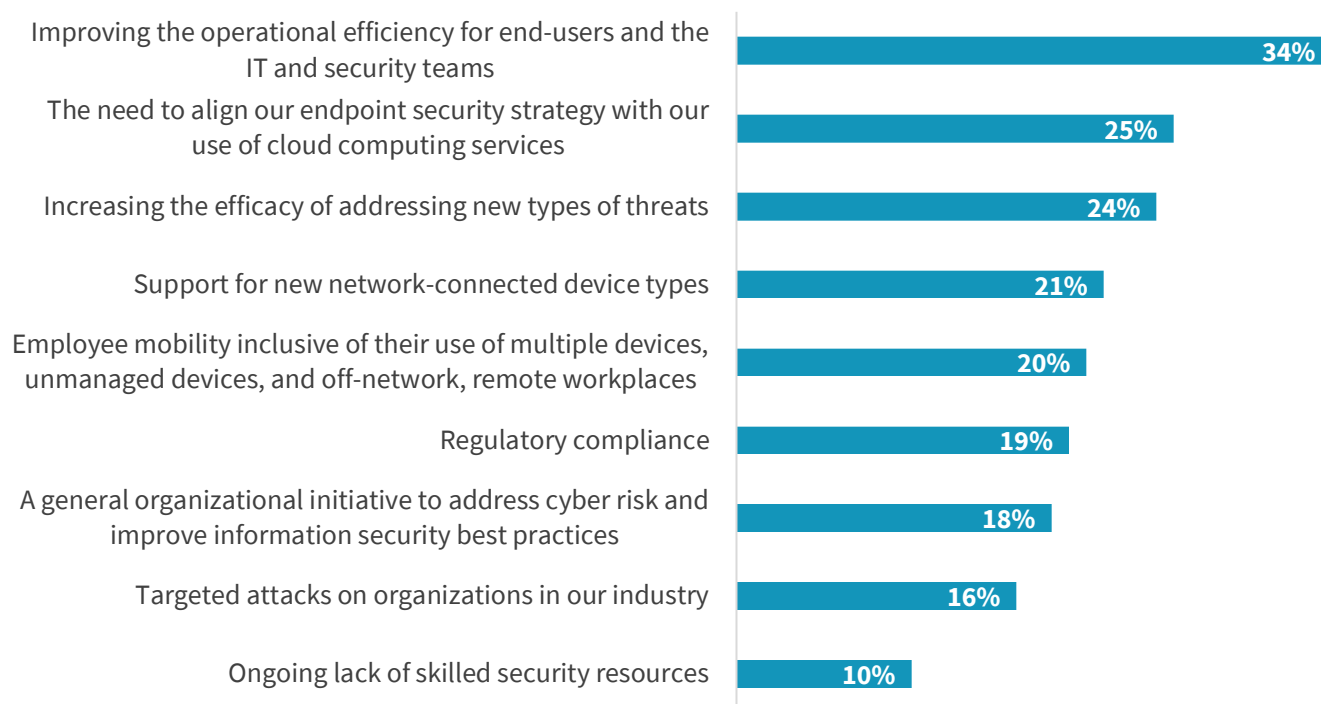|	
Security	34%
Simplified IT management	30%
Endpoint device flexibility	29%
Cloud consumption model (i.e., delivered as a service)	28%
Data protection	26%
Availability and resiliency	24%
Employee productivity	24%
Flexibility to support distributed workforce	20%
Scalability	20%
Business continuity	20%
Flexible purchasing options	20%
Compliance	16%

Source: ESG, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

[1] Source: ESG Complete Survey Results, *End-user Computing Trends*, February 2022.

Security being at the top of the list is no surprise given the growing sophistication of threats, the significant increase in ransomware attacks, and the unfortunate reality that more companies are being forced to pay ransom. ESG research shows that nearly half of respondent organisations (48%) have been the victim of a successful ransomware attack, and, of those, 64% paid a cyber ransom to regain access to their data, applications, and/or systems.[2]

The security challenge is tightly intertwined with the need for IT teams to be operationally efficient in supporting and managing end-users. According to ESG research, the factor that the largest percentage of organisations report as one of the considerations having the most significant influence on their endpoint security strategy moving forward is improving operational efficiency for end-users and their IT and security teams (see Figure 2).[3]

Figure 2. Security and Operational Efficiency Are Tightly Intertwined

Which of the following considerations would you characterize as having the most significant influence on your organization's endpoint security strategy moving forward? (Percent of respondents, N=359, two responses accepted)

Improving the operational efficiency for end-users and the IT and security teams	34%
The need to align our endpoint security strategy with our use of cloud computing services	25%
Increasing the efficacy of addressing new types of threats	24%
Support for new network-connected device types	21%
Employee mobility inclusive of their use of multiple devices, unmanaged devices, and off-network, remote workplaces	20%
Regulatory compliance	19%
A general organizational initiative to address cyber risk and improve information security best practices	18%
Targeted attacks on organizations in our industry	16%
Ongoing lack of skilled security resources	10%

Source: ESG, a division of TechTarget, Inc.

The Value of a Business PC Platform

Any organisation with PCs managed by IT professionals can benefit from using a business PC platform with remote management and integrated hardware-based security features. The goal is to deliver a great experience to users wherever they are located so they can be productive, collaborative, and secure with minimal limitations or distractions. In doing so, IT teams should also focus on ways to be more efficient to ease their management burden and costs. A business PC platform can address all of these needs in the following key ways:

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[2] Source: ESG Research Report, *2022 Technology Spending Intentions Survey*, November 2021.
[3] Source: ESG Complete Survey Results, *Endpoint Security Trends*, December 2021.

- **Productivity:** The platform should incorporate technologies designed to address how PCs are currently used in the workplace. For example, one of the major changes in the workplace is the increased use of video conferencing for meetings and presentations. Organisations should look for a platform that is focused on performance and, specifically, performance gains for modern applications and workloads. Also, with users working from a variety of locations, their PCs should not suffer significant performance degradation when they are not plugged into power. Laptop battery life is another important factor.

- **Comprehensive security:** The threat landscape has changed dramatically over the past couple of years, as adversaries exploit gaps in protection that are the result of increased attack surfaces and users working from home and/or remotely. With a platform model, IT and security teams can take advantage of built-in hardware protections as part of a multi-layered security approach that actively monitors and protects against attacks, without bogging down user productivity due to lost performance.

- **Manageability:** Remote fleet management is key in a hybrid world. Many IT teams are dispersed and working remotely. They must support, secure, and onboard users at any location, from any location. They must manage device lifecycles and repairs remotely. If user devices or applications are down, the business suffers from lost productivity, and the user's work experience and morale can suffer. Organisations should look for a platform that enables IT teams to keep the entire fleet patched, protected, and managed from any location; plus stability features that allow for consistent rollouts, reliable lifecycle management, and support for multi-platform, multi-ecosystem environments.

The Business Case for Intel vPro

When it comes to leveraging a business PC platform designed for the specific challenges of today's remote and hybrid workforce, the Intel vPro platform offers benefits that include:

- **Performance:** Performance hybrid architecture that intelligently allocates the right workload to the right core based on real-time analysis; improvements in application and web browsing performance versus competition and previous product generations; architecture designed for collaboration; performance cores for heavy applications; efficient cores for multitasking and scalability. Enhanced performance and connectivity are benefits of the latest 12th Gen Intel Core processors, with features such as Wi-Fi 6e, PCIe Gen 5, and DDR 5 memory.

- **Comprehensive security:** The latest generation of Intel vPro includes new capabilities from Intel Hardware Shield, including enhancements to Intel Threat Detection Technology. Intel vPro is also the only business platform with built-in hardware security to protect below the OS and improve detection of ransomware and software supply chain attacks.

- **Manageability:** Allows remote remediation of devices; enables full remote control and remediation beyond the firewall, including access to the BIOS screens; improves fleet control with Intel Active Management Technology (Intel AMT); modernizes device management and support operations with Intel Endpoint Management Assistant (Intel EMA).

- **PC fleet stability:** Platform-level validation that aims for minimal or no hardware changes for at least 15 months, or until the next generational release. This can boost the confidence of IT and business decision makers investing in a consistent PC platform that doesn't have significant hardware changes that result in additional time and cost in managing driver and patch updates. A benefit of the Intel vPro platform over the competition is that validation extends beyond the CPU and chipset into the graphics, connectivity, and security.

The Bigger Truth

Hybrid work is here to stay in the U.K., and meeting user expectations for a high-performance, high-quality, secure, and collaborative work experience has become a competitive necessity for organisations of all sizes, across all industries. This puts enormous pressure on IT teams to deliver a seamless user experience without adding complexity. The ESG research reflects these challenges, with operational efficiencies for end-users and IT, security, and simplified IT management the top priorities for IT professionals managing fleets of business PCs.

Delivering a great user experience is a matter of culture and management, but it's also a function of technology. In a time of digital transformation, organisations are best-served by equipping users and IT teams with modern technologies that address the challenges of the modern workplace. A business PC platform is a necessity for any organisation with IT professionals managing a fleet of devices. With the right solution, IT can improve productivity, security, manageability, and stability while delivering a seamless experience to workers wherever they are working.

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