

The game-changing potential of M2M technology for businesses

 By [Ronald Ravel](#)

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The case for introducing machine-to-machine (M2M) technology into the workplace is gaining in strength though, with solutions providers continuing to innovate and push the boundaries of what such technologies can achieve. The whole concept of M2M solutions - devices connecting, communicating, and working directly with one another - is that it can be anything organisations want and need it to be - all it takes is the right app or piece of code to be built around it.



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At this stage in its adoption though, many IT managers don't necessarily understand the potential of M2M, while fears around data and network security persist, particularly in the wake of recent global cyber-attacks. However, such concerns aren't projected to hold the market back for long, with SNS Research estimating that global spending on M2M and the internet of things (IoT) technologies will reach [nearly \\$250bn](#) by 2020.

[In the Middle East and Africa](#), IoT spend is set to reach \$7.8bn in 2017, according to a [report](#) by IDC earlier this year. In particular, the highest-spending industry verticals include manufacturing and transportation, both at \$1.3bn, and utilities at \$918m.

Mobile M2M solutions provide vast opportunities

The scope of M2M solutions is evolving to fuel this demand. Whereas stationary solutions, such as sensors, kick-started the market and remain popular, mobile M2M solutions provide vast opportunities across numerous sectors – helping to improve workflows, enhance interactions with staff and customers, and even improve the safety of workers.

Key to this development is the introduction of peripherals to the workplace, which can be partnered with mobile M2M gateway solutions to ensure cross-machine collaboration.

One natural example lies within the healthcare sector, where – from a consumer perspective – the fitness device market is already reaching a point of saturation. Looking at this from a professional angle, similar devices can be used to help doctors manage wellness rather than illness – with healthcare data being transmitted in real-time whether the 'patient' is at home or in hospital, medical professionals can continuously monitor vital signs such as heart rate and blood pressure,

ensuring predictive diagnosis and the introduction of preventative measures at the earliest possible stage.



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Elsewhere, peripherals like smart glasses (wearable display technology) can ensure a hands-free solution to workers across a range of roles – from oil rig workers to utility services. The manufacturing sector is one in which M2M already figures heavily – for example, machines on the production line can engage with one another so that, in case of a malfunction in one area, other machines are notified and can shut down safely while the fault is attended to.



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Mobile M2M solutions though, can help such companies to improve efficiency elsewhere. Take for example a warehouse employee benefitting from smart glasses, ensuring they can scan products hands-free and more safely (and accurately) manage logistics.

Operating systems' crucial role

Beyond the devices themselves, operating systems will also play a crucial role in the progression of M2M in the professional world. Currently, the focus is very much on writing software for iOS and Android – a smartphone-onus which again signifies the advanced stage of the consumer market. Yet the natural progression is for solutions providers to expand their focus to incorporate Windows 10 – this will serve as a catalyst in creating a greater number of solutions designed for professional use, which in turn will inspire more companies to turn their attention to developing M2M coding and apps to address different business needs.

It is only a matter of time until M2M becomes a major enabler for organisations across a number of sectors.

With such game-changing potential, it's important for IT managers to get ahead of the curve to understand how these technologies can empower their business.

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