

Macs in Big Old Corporations

The times they are a-changin'

Why am I still here?

Why did Kalle let me on the stage?

- Mac support tech, 2009-2015
- Mac admin, 2015-2022
- Member of the FinMacAdmin community, 2015-
- Security consultant, 2022-, serving mostly big Windows-only corporations.
- Usually talking more about human behaviour than tech.
- Switching to my current job, did all my Mac knowledge get lost in time, like tears in the rain?
- No.

The times they are a-changin'

"He that gets hurt will be he who has stalled."

- Bob Dylan is a great writer.
- My employer has been in the information security business for some time.
- We offer many kinds of security assessment and auditing services, but...
- Our customers haven't much asked for security consulting for Macs.
- Now, they increasingly do.
- When they do, I receive a call.

Why are the times a-changin'?

The times already changed, sir.

- User base.
- Who are the users saying that they *require* a Mac for their work?
- Developers
- Marketing and communications, social media producers, graphic designers, etc.
- IT workers, admins preferring a POSIX compliant system with a nice GUI
- Regular office workers
- *And* the new guy in top management they just hired who *demand*s a Mac.

What drives the change?

Sometimes it goes like this

- The new Senior Vice President demands a Mac. He says he'll resign if he doesn't get a Mac. He doesn't seem to *need* a Mac for any business critical stuff, he just happens to prefer a Mac, so the company buys a Mac for him.
- "Hi, Mark from the public relations department! If the SVP can have a Mac for regular office work, why can't I have one for my specialist graphic design work?"
- "Hi! Susan from the app dev team. I develop the company's iOS app. Not possible on any other platform than Apple's."
- "Hi! Nina from the server admin team. If I can't have a Mac, can I use Linux? Don't talk about Windows subsystem for Linux, it sucks, there's no way I'll use that. And by the way, the new SVP got a Mac for regular office work. He doesn't really *need* a Mac. I do!"
- "Hi! Graham from the social media production team! You want social media? Give me an iPhone and a Mac. Otherwise, I'll find another job. I already have offers. And why can the SVP have a Mac and I can't?"
- That's often when times start a-changin'.

Why do they call us?

Made-up examples

- The following examples do not point to any specific company.
- They are generic examples concocted from my personal experience and research.
- Asking the right questions in the right places is a skill.

Flibberdink

Imaginary customer #1

- Flibberdink is just starting to consider approving Macs in their environment and exploring ways to manage them.
- No management systems in place. No processes for device lifecycle management.
- "MDM? We don't know much about MDM. Do we really need it?"
- For Flibberdink, workstation deployments are imaging, then some scripting to get to a desired state.
- Flibberdink's IT environment is immature for Macs, but they're experienced with everything else.
- The people are smart. They just don't know much about managing Macs yet.

Haddaboogie Oyj

Imaginary customer #2

- Haddaboogie is a big old beast for a company. Trad industry, global operations.
- Haddaboogie began managing Macs a couple of years ago. They have an MDM in place.
- Haddaboogie's MDM is managed by their vendor. The configurations are the vendor's suggested best practices. Haddaboogie seeks for a second opinion on the vendor's recommendations.
- Haddaboogie also wants a general assessment and advice of their Mac management practices from a security point of view.
- Haddaboogie's environment is more mature than Flibberdink's, but they are not experienced with Macs and have second thoughts about their vendor's recommendations.

Matterfluff ClusterThing

Imaginary customer #3

- Matterfluff operates in Finland, it's huge, it's everywhere, and conglomerated.
- Matterfluff: "Hi, can you help us implement CIS Benchmark for macOS?"
- Matterfluff has a mature management environment for Macs, a variable user base, some hundreds of Macs, and a smart Mac admin.
- I read through the CIS Benchmark. Level 1 and Level 2 are very basic stuff.
- CIS auditing methods surprised me: using osascript to execute a JavaScript function that calls an ObjC function to get a simple answer if something is configured.
- My complaint was that a macOS auditor should always understand the test he's executing, but shouldn't be required to learn Objective-C or JavaScript for that. The methods offered by CIS are still valid and the technologies behind them are supported by Apple, so my complaint is petty. Just saying.

Conclusions

Or observations, at least

- Big Old Corporations have the same questions as smaller ones.
- Macs are more widely accepted nowadays, no way to stop it.
- Some are required to comply to a security standard, others are not. Offering advice on best practices is one thing and auditing a standard is another.
- Big Old Corporations' Mac management's maturity can be whatever level, just as with smaller organisations. We all start from a point and go from there.
- Big Old Corporations mostly have well-established processes for handling almost everything except Macs.

One more thing...

People are strange

- "People are strange when you're a stranger."
- It's a catchy song, thanks Jim, but consider this:
 - People are strange even when you're not a stranger.
 - People's minds are about the same size everywhere. Minds don't scale up as the environment grows. Not mine, not yours.
 - Big corp, small corp, any country, any culture, all approximately same size minds.
 - Everyone in the world appreciates honesty, a smile and a thank you. Everyone.

Thank you

Smile

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