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WHITE PAPER

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Public Safety Device Trends

By Bob O'Donnell, TECHnalysis Research Chief Analyst

SUMMARY

Public safety professionals from police and firemen to emergency medical responders and three-letter government agencies depend more on their technology devices every day. In order to best meet their demanding requirements, IT professionals from these diverse industries need to ensure they purchase devices that have the reliability and flexibility these critical applications require.

> "Public safety professionals are increasingly looking for adaptable devices like 2-in-1s and convertibles that can help do their jobs in more efficient and functional ways."—Bob O'Donnell, Chief Analyst

INTRODUCTION

As dedicated professionals who do much of their work in the field, individuals in the various aspects of the Public Safety industry—from law enforcement to military to mobile health care responders—need to have technology they can rely on. Devices like notebooks, tablets and 2-in-1s aren't their primary tools, but they do play critical supporting roles for these individuals. It's essential, therefore, to provide them with devices that meet their demands for performance and reliability.

In addition, because of the varied nature of their work—with much of it done outside a typical business environment, but some of it also entailing completing paperwork and more

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traditional productivity-like tasks—there's a great deal of interest in 2-in-1 devices that can function as a tablet in the field, and a notebook back at a desk.

PUBLIC SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

To document and analyze the specific requirements for IT devices in Public Safety, TECHnalysis Research recently undertook a study of over 130 US-based IT professionals from these organizations. The goal of the study was to better understand how and why Public Safety IT professionals purchase and use different combinations of devices, and what factors were most important to them.

The often time-sensitive nature of the work being done by Public Safety drives demanding performance requirements for their devices and Performance was the top purchase factor for notebooks and 2-in-1s and was a close second for tablets. In the case of tablets, long shifts in the field drove Battery Life to be the number one purchase consideration factor. The publicly-funded nature of many of these jobs often means budgets are tight, so it's not terribly surprising that Price and Reliability were also highly ranked across all three different product categories.

Top 5 Purchase Factors in Public Safety	Notebooks	Tablets	2-in-1s
1	Performance	Battery Life	Performance
2	Price	Performance	Price
3	Reliability	Price	Reliability
4	Functionality	Reliability	Battery Life
5	Long life cycle	Functionality	Functionality

Comments from one survey respondent nicely summarized many of the concerns from IT professionals in these industries. "I'd say battery life and ease of use is really big in my environment…we have a lot of veterans that are not tech savvy, and we have a lot more to worry about than get information overload or have units that can't last an entire shift. Most complaints come from the guys that are out on the streets about their equipment needing to recharge, taking spare batteries, etc."
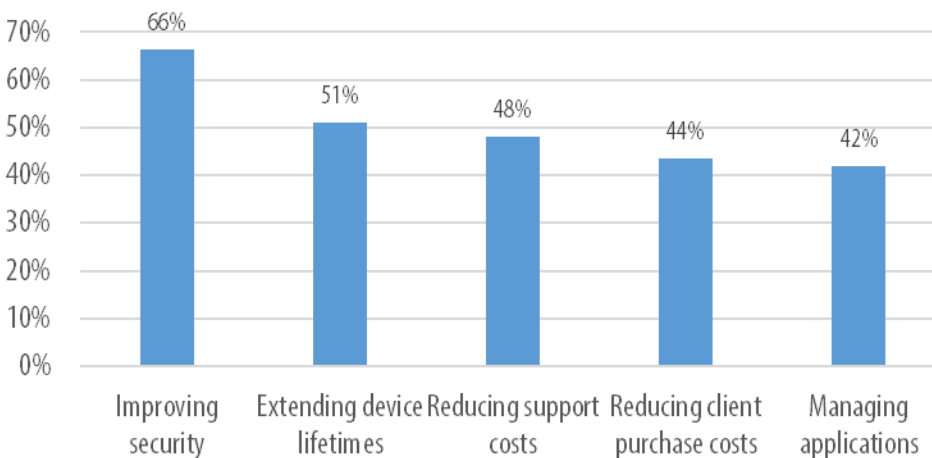
Another respondent described an important shift in thinking. "Notebooks are gradually being phased out in our org in favor of tablets and 2-in-1s. There is some concern about the durability of 2-in-1s, however."

Overall, Public Safety organizations still primarily rely on notebooks, but tablets have started to grow in importance, and there's extremely strong interest in 2-in-1s and convertibles.

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Though only about half of the organizations surveyed said they had deployed any 2-in-1s and the installed base is still relatively small, Public Safety IT personnel said that they expect to purchase an impressive 2x (185%) more 2-in-1s over the next twelve months than they currently have. Many Public Safety organizations said they don't really see a need yet for 2-in-1s, and a few who did early deployments reported some challenges, but that doesn't seem to be negatively impacting the burgeoning interest in the category.

Public Safety Top 5 Client Priorities

Priority	Percentage
Improving security	66%
Extending device lifetimes	51%
Reducing support costs	48%
Reducing client purchase costs	44%
Managing applications	42%

At a higher level, 2/3 of all respondents said their number one priority when it came to choosing and using client devices was improving security. As another respondent related regarding their organization's priorities, "Security above all else. Scrambling passwords, renewing passwords. Implementing various other means of security rather than just passwords."

Given the pricing concerns typically found in public institutions, a desire to extend device lifetimes was also a key priority, as was reducing client purchase costs. Many Public Safety IT professionals also expressed a strong interest in Windows 10. After the limited impact and series of questions raised by Windows 8, the new Microsoft OS offering looks to have a very positive impact in helping achieve longer lifetimes for devices that have been designed and optimized for Windows 10.

In addition, because many IT organizations have a great deal of experience with Windows and Windows-based management tools, the growing use of Windows 10 on tablets, as well as notebooks and 2-in-1s, can drive reductions in support costs and improvements in application management, two other key areas of focus for Public Safety IT.

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MEETING THE NEEDS

Knowing the issues that Public Safety IT buyers have is one thing, but delivering products that they're interested in is another. Fujitsu has been serving numerous sub-segments of the Public Safety industry with IT products for many years now. It not only understands these different fields, but also has products that are well-suited to each one's unique demands. Fujitsu's new Stylistic Q775 business-rugged detachable 2-in-1, for example, offers the kind of flexibility and reliability that many Public Safety organizations are starting to look for. In addition, like all Fujitsu mobile computing products, it offers options for integrated cellular broadband, which is a critical need for Public Safety personnel.

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Fujitsu also has a strong heritage of hardware-based security options, such as smart card, fingerprint, integrated TPM, and even their unique Palm Vein reading biometric authentication methods, all of which can make a critical difference in sensitive environments like Public Safety.

In addition, features like spill-resistant keyboards and dual digitizers on their touch screens are the kinds of practical differences that extend product lifetimes and improve the flexibility of the devices in different applications. Dual digitizers, which allow you to use either your finger or stylus for input, can be particularly important in field situations where users may be wearing gloves or need a fast reliable way to enter data while doing a patient examination and want the flexibility of using either input method.

CONCLUSIONS

IT professionals in Public Safety have a wide variety of options when it comes to their device providers and, the truth is, there are a number of strong, and relatively similar offerings from many of them. However, the devil, as they say, is in the details, and this is where a few of the unique benefits of a more specialized vendor can make a difference.

Companies who understand the unique needs of Public Safety users also better understand how their devices are going to be used in those environments and can adjust their product

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plans accordingly. With a long history of serving many different types of Public Safety organizations, and a wide variety of products to fit different requirements, Fujitsu is well positioned to address today's Public Safety IT professional's needs.

For more information, please visit www.publicsafety.fai.fujitsu.com