

Simplifying Device Management Via Managed Device as a Service



Cloud
Solutions



Introduction

Work patterns suddenly shifted in March of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overnight, organizations were forced to operate with an entirely remote workforce. In many cases, this entailed either providing employees with corporate laptops, or setting up home computers with the appropriate business software. In the mad scramble to get everyone online and productive, companies attempted a variety of approaches.

Some adopted a bring your own device (BYOD) policy. It was up to users to furnish the laptops, tablets, or computers needed to work from home (WFH). Others deployed virtualized desktops that enable user profiles, applications, and data to follow them regardless of the device. But regardless of the approach, many companies struggled under the burden of managing an increasingly flexible workforce. IT departments wrestled with a variety of challenges:

- Device procurement
- Supporting a remote workforce
- Software licensing
- A surge in help desk requests
- And a greater number of security problems due to the organizational perimeter being pushed far beyond the firewall, coupled with less visible oversight of employee adherence to security protocols.

Instead of catering to an in-house group, IT was forced to manage, maintain, and service geographically dispersed

devices. Some IT departments responded to urgent demands to provide devices by procuring what was immediately available. This sometimes resulted in users being supplied with inadequate hardware loaded with the wrong software, and with systems that could not provide the level of performance their duties demanded.

Trials and tribulations such as these helped further a long-simmering realization that organizations do not wish to be in the business of managing devices. Only those with well-manned and highly skilled IT departments can easily cope with the demands of device management.

But even in those cases, businesses face an important decision: should those IT resources continue to look after devices, or would they be better deployed in forwarding strategic business initiatives?



With many businesses favoring the latter option, Managed Device as a Service (MDaaS) has emerged. Designed for businesses of all sizes, MDaaS helps to simplify hardware procurement and management by leasing devices and providing IT support. Organizations gain access to hardware and support at one predictable monthly fee. This reduces infrastructure and IT management costs, while helping businesses avoid costly capital expenditure (CapEx) and hardware refresh costs. It also helps give employees the flexibility, support, and peace of mind they need to remain productive regardless of their location.

These factors drive the creation of this e-book. It offers valuable insight on:

- How to enable seamless device management for the entire workforce whether at home, in the office, or on the road
- How device procurement only accounts for 20% of overall lifecycle costs. The other [80%](#) is spent on deployment, management, maintenance, support, regular replacement, and disposal of devices¹
- How to reduce IT complexity and hardware costs by transferring high CapEx into low monthly, subscription-based operating expenditures (OpEx)
- Why robust support is an essential element of dispersed device usage
- How organizations can increase productivity and efficiency, while maintaining the highest degree of security
- How to implement MDaaS in your organization

¹ The Fintech Times, Uncovering the Hidden Costs of Ageing IT Equipment, 2019, <https://thefintechtimes.com/costs-of-ageing-it-equipment/>



The Problems of Device Management

Many organizations buy devices for their users and try to manage them internally. They often become overwhelmed by the time, resources, and cost of managing and refreshing those devices across their lifecycle. With the MDaaS model, organizations have the ability to recycle devices more regularly, so users have better devices at their disposal.

Too narrow a focus on hardware purchasing alone can lead to expensive errors. The simple fact is that the purchase price of devices averages about 20% of their overall Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). Additional lifetime costs dwarf the spending on hardware alone. The rest of the money is consumed by device management and support.

These costs rise even higher as the equipment ages and as the performance and reliability of the device decreases. Decisions to delay device replacement may conserve cash over the short term. However, IT support costs rise steadily, and user satisfaction and productivity rates can plummet. It is a false economy to hang on to old devices, one that can end up costing more in the long run.

But even those sticking to a three-year laptop lifecycle will find it difficult to contain costs if they attempt to take care of the entire device management function internally.



Consider the many duties involved:

Device procurement: Every year, IT needs to procure enough devices for new employees, and ideally replace aging devices every three or four years. This entails engagement with suppliers, negotiating the best bulk discounts, budgeting for the funds, placing the orders, receiving the goods, unpacking the equipment, and disposing of the boxes and packing materials.

Configuration and deployment: Once received, each device must have software installed, drivers updated, and must be logged as a device on the network before being assigned to a user. They must be configured correctly with the appropriate features and applications and deployed efficiently in accordance with policy.

Training and adoption: Personnel need to be trained well on how to use their devices and applications, how to access the network, maintain high levels of security, and how to achieve an optimum level of productivity.

Device maintenance: Devices need constant attention. Software and hardware issues must be resolved, updates and patches installed, warranty issues dealt with, and network connectivity and security postures maintained. This necessitates a manned and efficient help desk that can respond to user needs effectively and in a timely manner. IT must be attentive to employee requests to ensure they become productive.



Device repairs: In any large organization, accidents and damage are inevitable, particularly with mobile and traveling employees. Personnel must exist with the requisite skills to address problems such as broken screens, faulty hard drives, and the many other issues that arise.

Device disposal: Each year, there will be laptops and other devices that are either too badly damaged to have further value or have reached their end of life and need replacement. This can add up to hundreds or even thousands of devices. Take for example, a company of 1,200 people. If devices are replaced every three years, that adds up to 400 new devices that need to be deployed each year, as well as 400 to be disposed of securely. Each old machine needs to have

all of its data deleted, and any stored data on hard drives or solid state drives rendered utterly unreadable. This alone can take several hours per device. Once done, all equipment must be transported to a disposal facility.

With the right processes in place for the management of devices from the beginning of their lifecycle to the end, it is possible to greatly lower costs and boost employee efficiency. However, many organizations struggle with the numerous duties involved. It becomes a contest in IT between overseeing employee devices versus having sufficient time and budget to fulfill the plans of management related to the implementation of technology to forward strategic objectives.



Device Management Distracts from Core Competencies

After more than a year of a hiatus, the workforce is gradually returning to the office. But according to consulting firm [Gartner](#), 74% of Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) expect telecommuting to continue well after COVID-19 has been forgotten.² Thus, devices will continue to play a vital role in facilitating a seamless transition between the mobile and the office experience.

But device management typically entails the procurement, management, repair, and disposal or repurposing of hundreds or even thousands of laptops each year. The last thing any organization wants is to be embroiled in the management of devices if that means there is not enough time available for IT to roll out applications that will boost revenue or improve customer service. Every minute spent dealing with laptop management detracts from the achievement of corporate objectives.

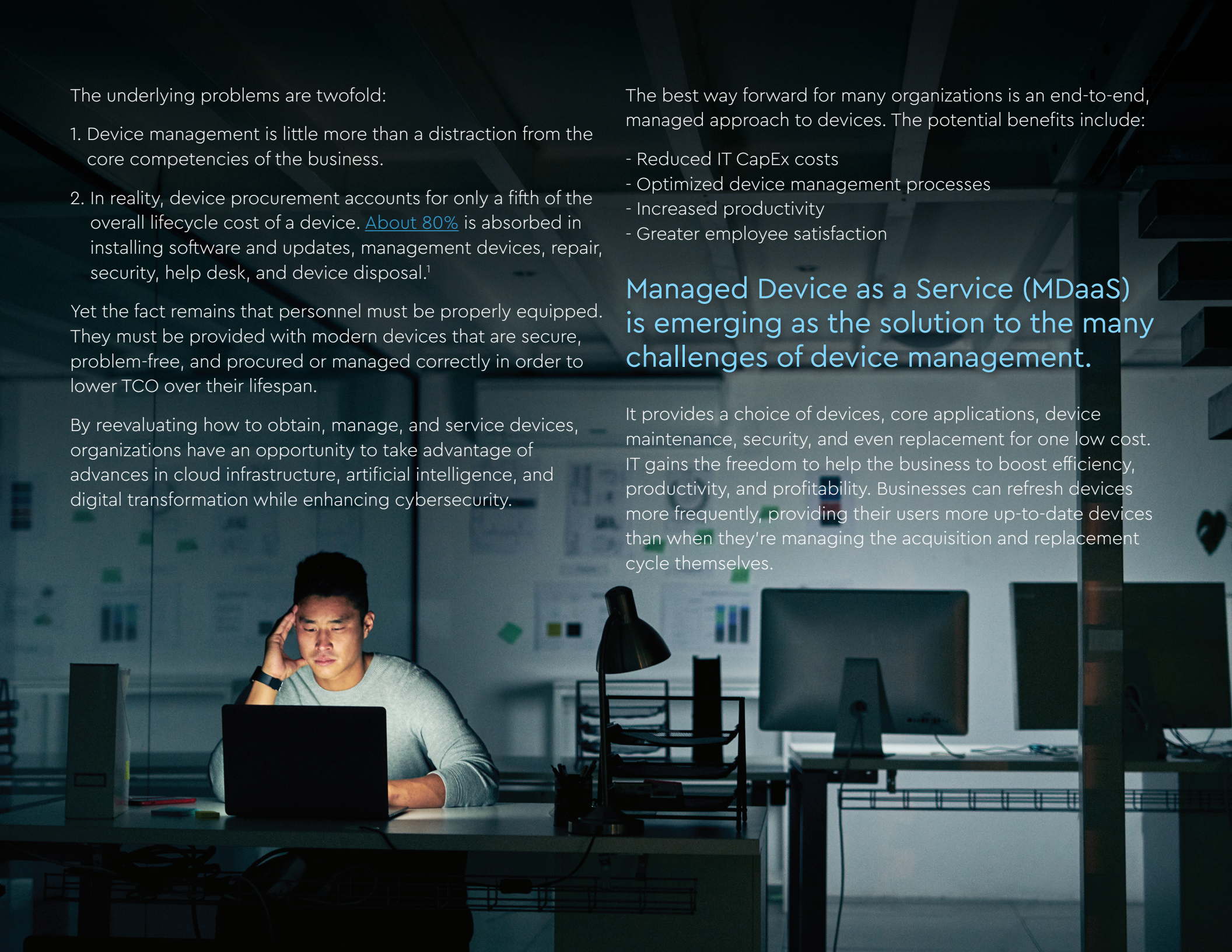
In some cases, however, organizations have become bogged down in the problems of laptop ownership. Technology budgets have spiraled out of control. Large storerooms have become cluttered with broken or obsolete devices. Businesses cannot refresh their device pools as frequently as they'd like and as is optimal to ensure their users are as productive and the business as competitive.

Attempting to cope with device ownership and management internally, then, typically results in a series of unforeseen consequences:

- Devouring the IT budget with less money or resources left over for strategic IT priorities
- Long delays in servicing devices and returning them to employees, which hampers productivity
- Emergency requests for the procurement of loaner devices due to mounting repair and service backlogs
- Endless security flaps due to out-of-date patches and updates
- Vital projects taking far too long to complete due to IT personnel spending their time on other duties
- Poor user satisfaction ratings on devices and IT support
- Decreased efficiency of employees

² Gartner, Gartner CFO Survey Reveals 74% Intend to Shift Some Employees to Remote Work Permanently, 2020, <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2020-04-03-gartner-cfo-surey-reveals-74-percent-of-organizations-to-shift-some-employees-to-remote-work-permanently>





The underlying problems are twofold:

1. Device management is little more than a distraction from the core competencies of the business.
2. In reality, device procurement accounts for only a fifth of the overall lifecycle cost of a device. [About 80%](#) is absorbed in installing software and updates, management devices, repair, security, help desk, and device disposal.¹

Yet the fact remains that personnel must be properly equipped. They must be provided with modern devices that are secure, problem-free, and procured or managed correctly in order to lower TCO over their lifespan.

By reevaluating how to obtain, manage, and service devices, organizations have an opportunity to take advantage of advances in cloud infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and digital transformation while enhancing cybersecurity.

The best way forward for many organizations is an end-to-end, managed approach to devices. The potential benefits include:

- Reduced IT CapEx costs
- Optimized device management processes
- Increased productivity
- Greater employee satisfaction

Managed Device as a Service (MDaaS)
is emerging as the solution to the many
challenges of device management.

It provides a choice of devices, core applications, device maintenance, security, and even replacement for one low cost. IT gains the freedom to help the business to boost efficiency, productivity, and profitability. Businesses can refresh devices more frequently, providing their users more up-to-date devices than when they're managing the acquisition and replacement cycle themselves.

What is MDaaS?

To fully understand MDaaS, it is necessary to differentiate it from other approaches to device management.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD): BYOD is all about user independence. Whatever device they possess, it is up to IT to enable people to function securely whether in the office or remotely. IT has to purchase, distribute, and configure any needed software. IT also has to manage the maintenance and support of those endpoints but typically does not have full administrative control of the device. On the back end, IT needs to procure, build, manage, and operate the underlying infrastructure.

Issuing and refreshing corporate laptops: Some companies issue everyone with an approved corporate laptop to be used in the performance of their duties wherever they are. IT controls each user device and can restrict the applications that are allowed to run. As with BYOD, a well-staffed IT department is needed, one that possesses the necessary skills for remote desktop management and support. IT

does all the heavy lifting. Each device must be provided with properly licensed and configured software, employee data, and other tools to work on the corporate network. However, many companies lack the bandwidth to meet the ongoing demands of the business while performing all device troubleshooting and continuous help desk support.

Virtual desktops: Desktop virtualization separates the desktop environment and associated applications and data from the physical client device traditionally used for access. The various components of the desktop are virtualized, which allows for greater flexibility and simpler disaster recovery as no data is saved locally to the user workstation. If a user loses the device, the components remain available once a new device is employed and the appropriate login credentials are presented. Some organizations have the resources to manage virtual desktops internally, but most hand the function over to an external provider.

Desktop as a Service (DaaS): The IT department passes the responsibility for desktop management to an experienced provider. Regardless of the device, the user's virtual desktop is available via the cloud. Basic hosted DaaS, however, provides a limited ability to tailor the desktop environment to specific user and business needs, since hosted desktops typically work off a single image. The tiers of service aren't comprehensive enough for many organizations.

Managed Desktop as a Service (DaaS): Basic hosting services don't offer sufficient breadth of services and support to take care of every facet of hosting all virtual desktops. Hence, full-service managed DaaS offering deals with every aspect of architecture, implementation, resource provisioning, load balancing, networking, and all aspects of virtual desktop and user support.

MDaaS is an all-inclusive solution that helps organizations to simplify hardware procurement and management through leasing devices and providing IT support.

For one affordable monthly price, MDaaS helps reduce infrastructure and IT costs, while giving employees the flexibility, support that spans the entire device lifecycle and peace of mind they need to work from virtually anywhere with a managed laptop or tablet. Thus, the heavy load, placed on IT, of managing organizational devices is reduced by adopting the MDaaS model.

A key differentiator among providers is the amount of care and understanding a provider invests in the customer's existing IT environment, needs of the business, and how MDaaS fits in with ongoing strategic and educational initiatives. Thus,

it is imperative to choose a provider with a track record of excellence in supplying and managing devices for a large number of organizations.

Those electing to switch to MDaaS may discover that it offers a pathway for organizations to help reinvent the modern workplace, improve communication, simplify administrative operations, and cut costs. Instead of purchasing the devices and being left with the problem of taking care of them for several years, the devices are leased and automatically replaced every three years. This ensures employees are provided with the latest laptops and tablets.

The benefits of MDaaS include:

- Reduced infrastructure and IT management costs.
- Reduce costly CapEx by transferring budgeting to a low monthly, all-inclusive lease fee per device.
- Regular device refresh and replacement costs are factored into the pricing.
- If a device is stolen or damaged, one replacement per lease term is included within the price.

MDaaS from Cox Business

Cox Business offers a way to empower employees with reliable, flexible, and secure managed devices via its all-inclusive MDaaS solution. With an extensive background in supporting the business community, Cox Business MDaaS allows users to work from virtually anywhere with a managed laptop or tablet for one affordable monthly price.

The simplicity and end-to-end support rolled into Cox Business MDaaS for Business provide a great many benefits:

- **Cost Efficiency:** Access hardware and support at a predictable price and help avoid costly one-time hardware refresh costs when you renew your device at the end of the lease. This includes operating systems, key applications, as well as support, warranty, and more.
- **Device Choice:** Organizations can select from a range of laptops and tablets from HP, Samsung, and LG.
- **Hardware Replacement:** Help avoid costly one-time hardware refresh costs when you renew your device at the end of the lease. Cox Business maintains a pool of spare devices to facilitate repairs, replacements, or warranty matters to ensure users always have reliable access to devices.
- **Software Included:** Fully licensed Windows 10 software, and Microsoft 365 from Cox Business is available/optional with every device.
- **Microsoft Gold Partner:** Cox Business is trusted by Microsoft to deliver Microsoft 365 services.
- **Easily Scalable Solution:** Easily add new devices and services at any time without changing the per-device cost.
- **Full-Service Coverage:** Simplify device lifecycle management and IT hardware procurement, while easing other IT burdens that come with managing and supporting company devices.
- **Comprehensive 24/7 Support:** Cox Business provides a single point of contact and resolution for any issues relating to hardware, software, performance, maintenance, repair, or replacement. Strong relationships with our technology partners allow us to rapidly resolve any issues on the first call. We support your IT team and your end users directly.
- **Advanced Replacement:** In the event that your equipment needs to be fixed or replaced, we ship replacement devices within two business days. Warranty issues are also included as part of the service. Terms and conditions apply.
- **Employee Satisfaction:** Cox Business boasts a best-in-class 4.8 out of 5 customer satisfaction rating to ensure device issues are promptly addressed.



Ready to get started?

Throughout the work week, a variety of device-related challenges may arise. Cox Business certified engineers help keep all devices maintained, repaired, and operating to ensure users stay logged in, engaged, and productive. With this comprehensive MDaaS solution, there is no need to juggle the many tasks of a company-wide refresh of new devices such as coordinating third parties, staffing a help desk, supporting a pool of spares, or overseeing service and repair delivery.



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For more information, visit
cox.com/business/cloud-services/mdaas.html