Parallels®

Use of Mac Devices in SMBs: 2020 Survey

Data Shows 56% of SMBs Are Ready to Allow Mac Devices in the Workplace

White Paper | Parallels Desktop for Mac Business Edition

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Introduction

Most of us are aware of the growing presence of Mac devices in the workplace—Mac OS X accounts for 16% of desktops worldwide. But there are a lot of things about this trend we still don't know. What is the extent of Mac penetration in businesses? How are these devices being managed? What benefits do they offer to both businesses and employees?

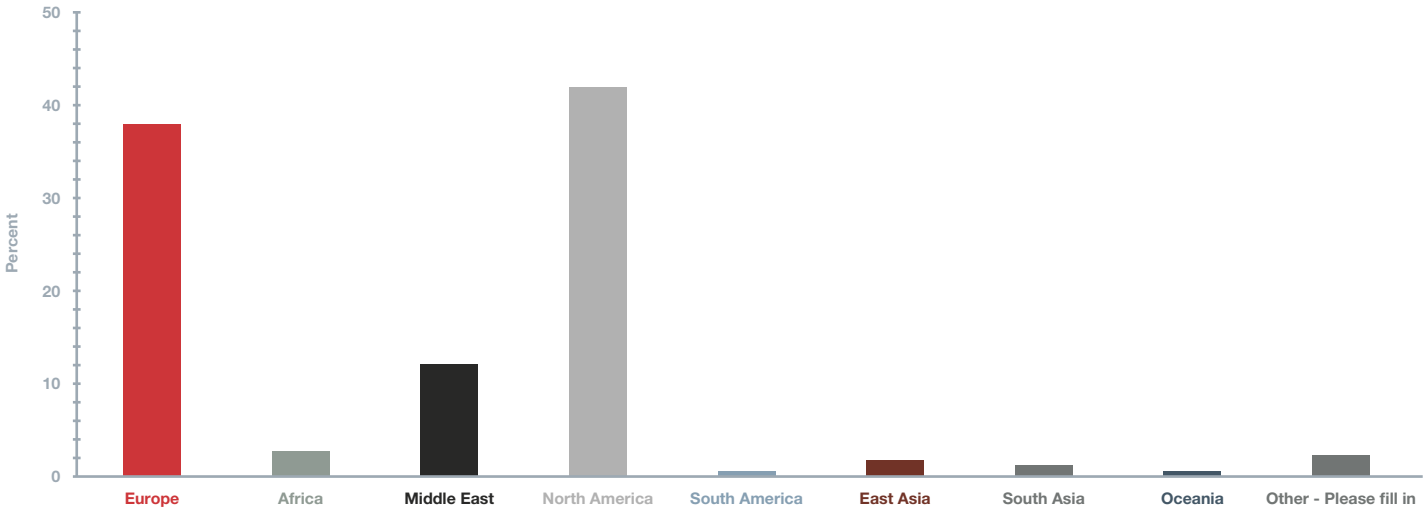
This information can be useful for decision-makers and other stakeholders who want a better understanding of how Mac devices are being used in the workplace today. It can be used to compare with their own existing organizational practices, policies and approaches in their own organizations, to make updates or changes and to create a roadmap for the future.

Survey Participant Demographics

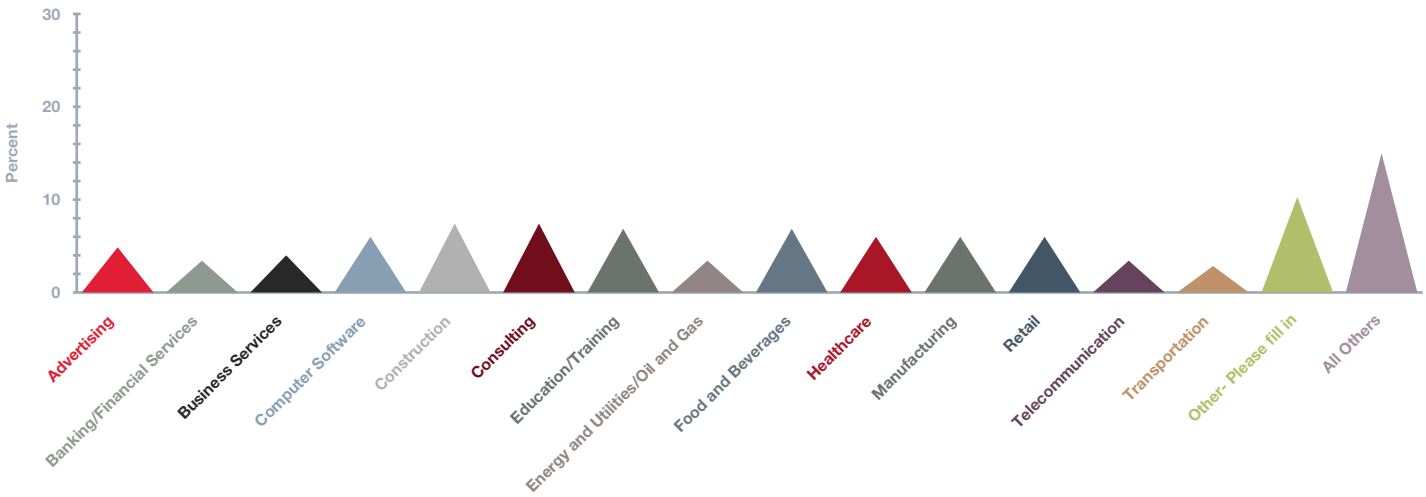
To understand the current state of Mac usage in the workplace, Parallels surveyed over 1,000 IT professionals around the globe. About 53.2% were from Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), 40.1% from North America, and the rest from Asia, South America and Oceania.

The survey targeted businesses from a wide range of industries, including Consulting (8%), Construction (7.4%), Food and Beverages (6.8%), Education/Training (6.2%) and Retail (6.2%). This survey was conducted in December 2020.

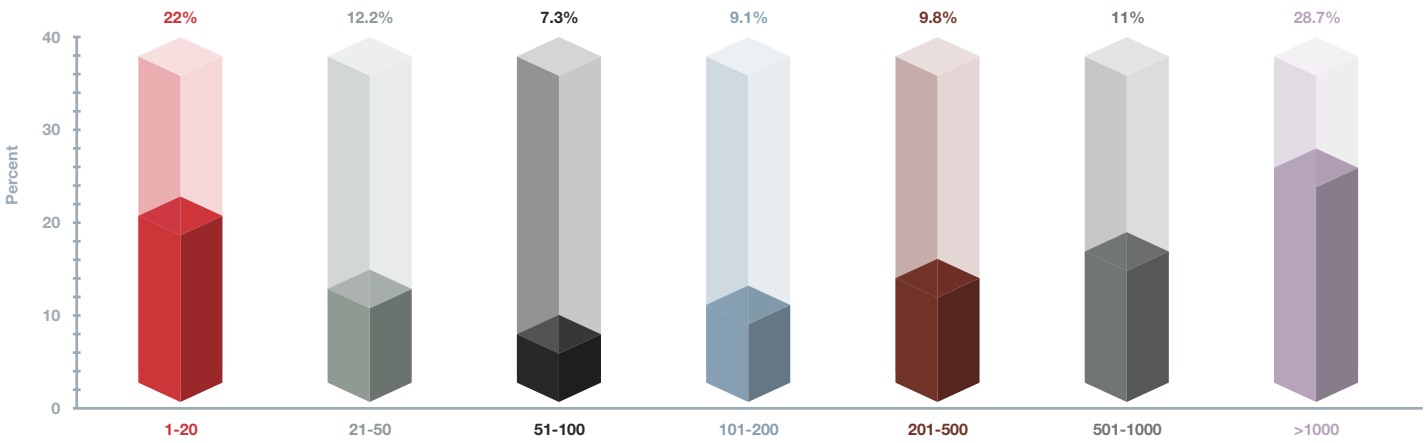
1. Where are you based?



2. Which industry are you in?



3. How many employees are at your company?



Key Takeaways

- 55.7% of small to medium businesses (SMBs) are now ready to allow Mac devices in the workplace.
- Performance is the #1 perceived advantage of using Mac devices at work.
- Mac computers are most popular in IT (53.2%) and Marketing/Creative (49.4%) departments.
- Most SMBs (42.2%) use client-based desktop virtualization to run Windows on Mac.
- Concern about application compatibility is the #1 deterrent of using Mac in the workplace.

A majority of SMBs are now willing to allow Mac devices in the workplace

The survey shows that the majority (55.7%) of SMBs are receptive to the idea of allowing Mac devices in the workplace. This is certainly surprising, considering that a lot of SMBs don't have dedicated IT staff, let alone departments, leaving many with a lack of IT Mac expertise.

Mac is most popular in departments that have high computing requirements

Most respondents said they choose Mac devices due to their performance (42.9%) and security (37.9%) capabilities. One possible reason why these advantages are given more weight is that Mac usage is most popular in IT (53.2%) departments, as well as Marketing/Creative (49.4%) and Design departments (44.2%). Many job roles in these departments require tools and applications that have exceptionally high computing requirements to store large graphic and video files, for example.

Virtualization is the de facto solution for running Windows on Mac

Since most applications used by employees are Windows-based, many companies who use Mac devices turn to solutions that allow them to install and run those Windows applications on their Mac devices. The go-to choices for this are virtualization solutions such as Parallels® Desktop for Mac, VMware Fusion, Microsoft Remote Desktop Service (RDS), Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops and Parallels® Remote Application Server (RAS).

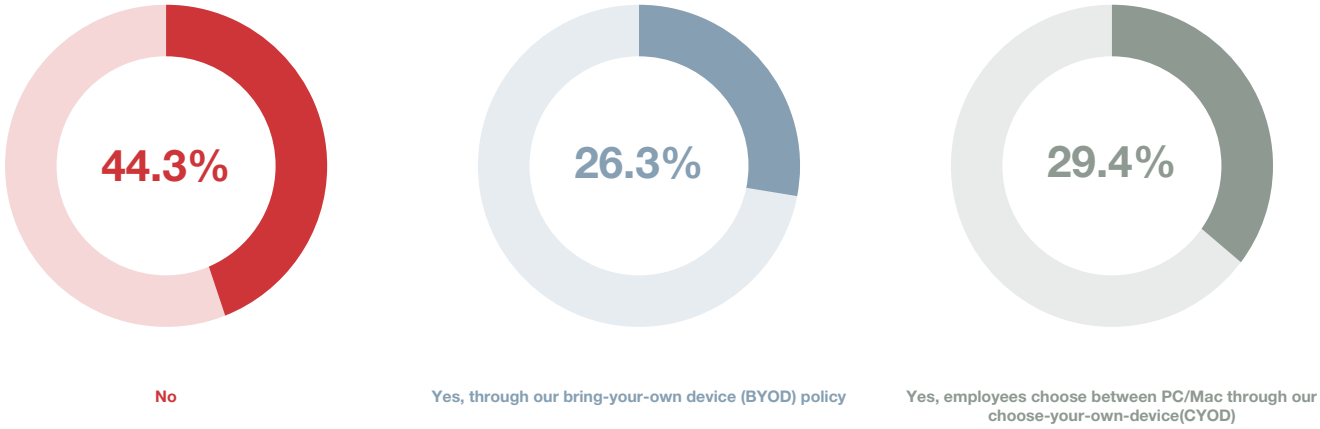
Application incompatibility and high TCO are the biggest deterrents to Mac adoption

Those who don't have Mac devices in their workplace are mostly deterred by concerns about application compatibility (24.6%) and total cost of ownership, or TCO (21.3%).

The first issue can be addressed by virtualization solutions, which allow certain operating systems, as well as applications native to those operating systems, to run on top of another OS. For example, this type of solution can enable Windows to run on top of macOS. This means a Windows-based line of business (LOB) application, for instance, would be able to run on a Mac even if it isn't built to run on macOS.

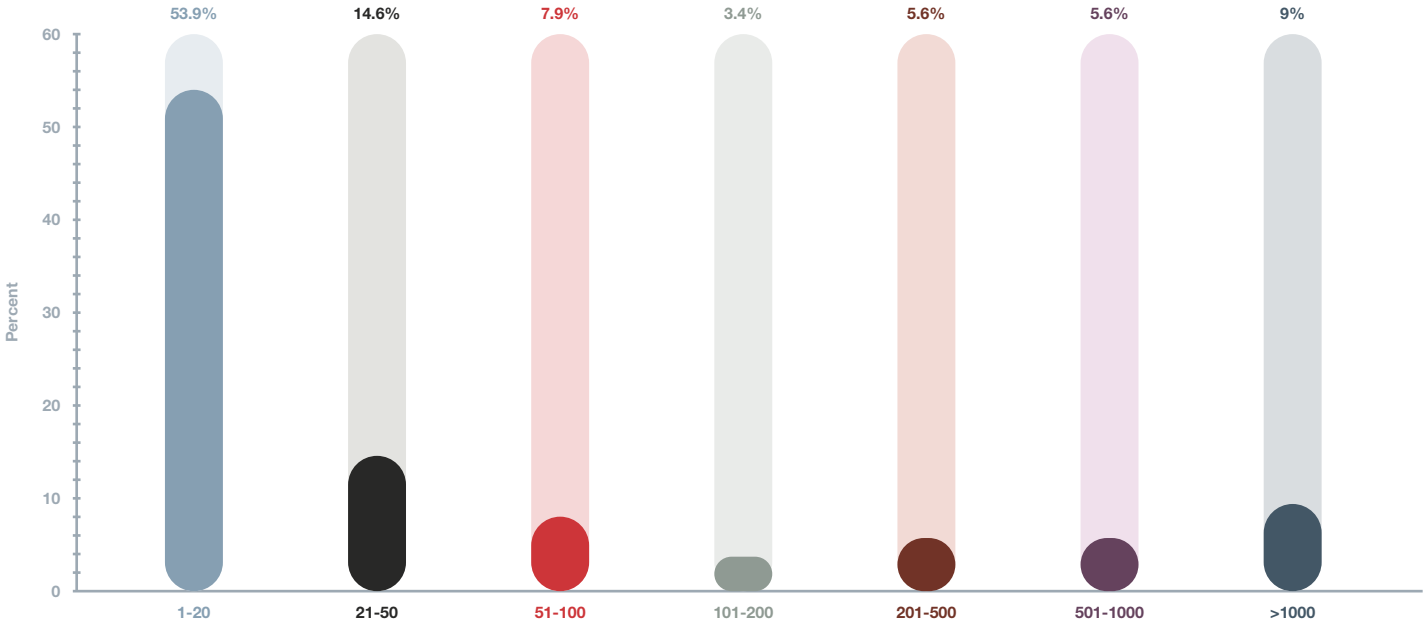
Additional Results and Insights

4. Are Mac devices allowed at your workplace?



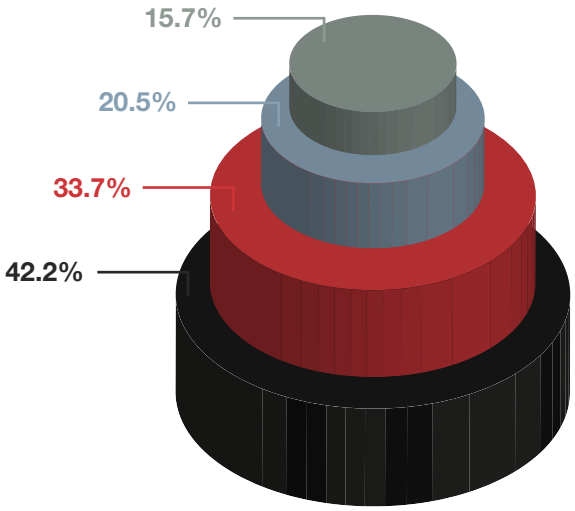
Most respondents (55.7%) say Mac devices are allowed in their workplace. This includes those who allow them via a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policy (26.3%) or choose-your-own-device (CYOD) policy (29.4%). While this data is indicative of the growing popularity of Mac in the workplace, it also shows the reluctance of some companies to accept Mac (44.3% is by no means negligible). The responses to the question below provide some insight as to why this is.

5. How many Mac devices are at your company?



Although Mac devices are steadily gaining ground in the workplace, the vast majority of companies who allow them only have a few (1–20). However, 9% said they have more than a thousand Mac devices in their organization.

6. What method of delivering Windows applications to Mac users are you currently using?



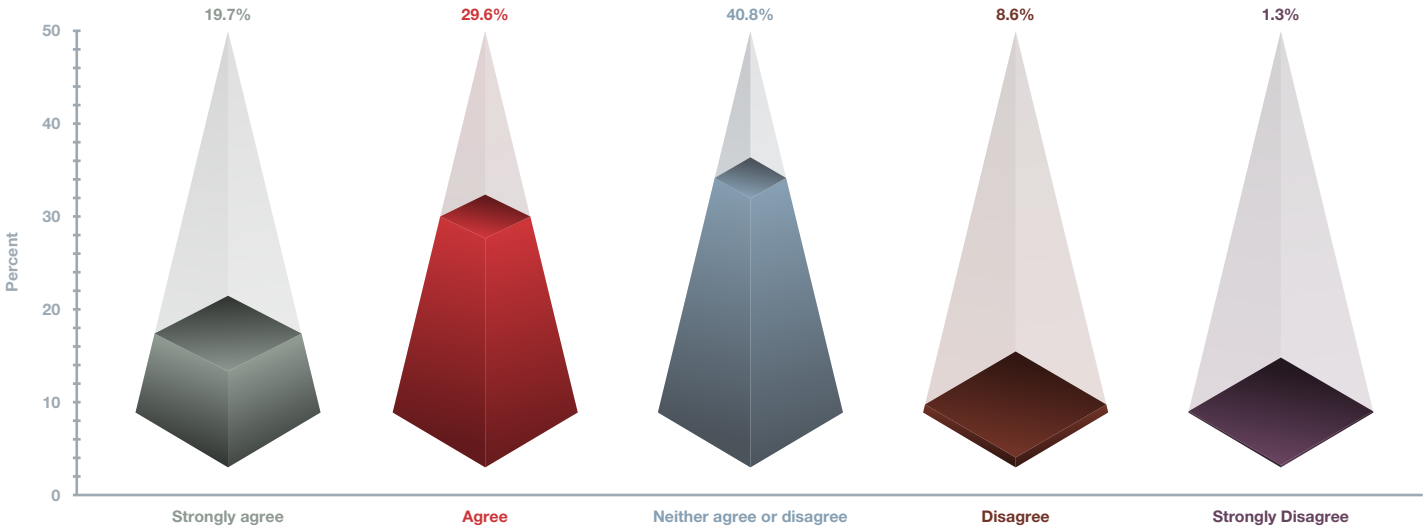
- **Desktop virtualization such as Parallels Desktop™ for Mac or VMware Fusion**
- **Remote access through Microsoft RDS, Citrix Virtual App and Desktops, Parallels**
- **Other - Please fill in**
- **Remote access to a PC**

Despite the rise in Mac device and app usage, many companies still use Windows applications for everyday tasks. These companies must find ways to deliver these applications to their fleet of Mac devices.

The most popular type of solution for this is locally installed desktop virtualization solutions, such as Parallels Desktop and VMware Fusion. These solutions are typically installed on the desktop operating system (in this case, macOS) of end-user Mac devices. Windows instances are then run as guest operating systems.

The second most popular type of solution is server-based virtualization solutions like Microsoft RDS, Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops and Parallels RAS. Installed on servers instead of the Mac devices themselves, these solutions deliver Windows applications remotely to an organization's Mac endpoint devices.

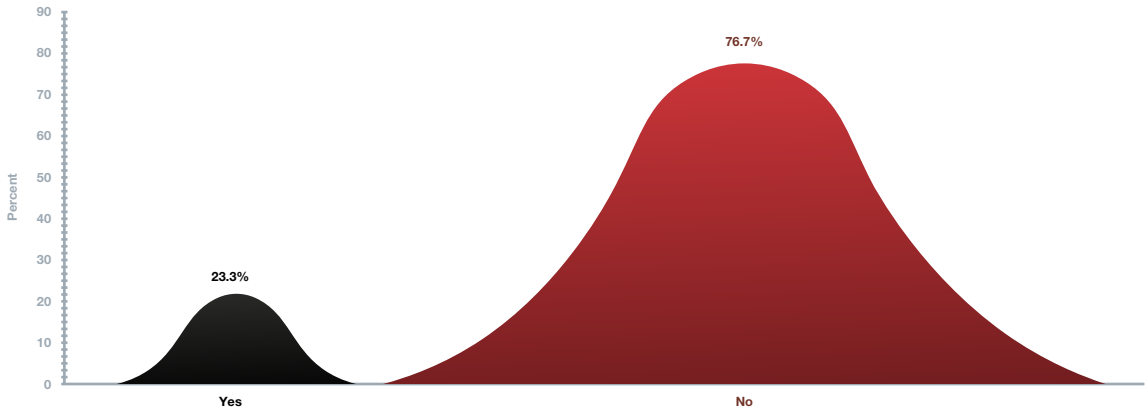
7. According to StatCounter (https://gs.statcounter.com/os-market-share), macOS is growing in market share in the last 12 months. What do you think?



49.3% of respondents agree or strongly agree that macOS has been growing in market share in the last 12 months. They far outnumber those who disagree and strongly disagree, who account for only 9.9% of total respondents.

Although these observations are mainly based on anecdotal evidence, the fact that the same observation is shared by an overwhelming majority of respondents can't be ignored. Because the respondents are IT professionals, many hold positions that allow them to observe these trends from an authoritative vantage point (for example, system administrators, IT managers and helpdesk staff).

8. Do you employ a dedicated solution for Mac management?



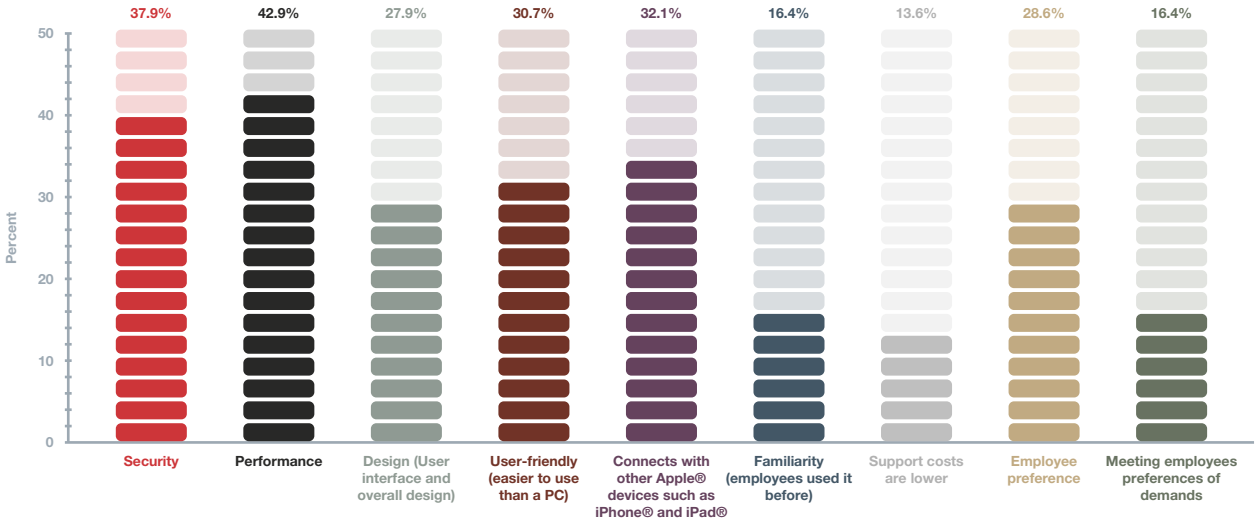
There's a substantial difference between the number of respondents who say they don't employ a dedicated solution for Mac management and those who do. In fact, the amount of "No" respondents are more than three times higher than the "Yes" respondents. This probably explains why 44.3% answered "No" to Question #4: "Are Mac devices allowed at your workplace?"

The absence of a dedicated management solution could mean one of two things:

- Mac management is incorporated into organizations' solution for managing Windows devices
- Mac devices are simply left unmanaged

Organizations may have a predefined notion that it's challenging to manage Mac devices in the workplace. However, with the right solution, such as Parallels Device Management, managing Mac computers and Apple mobile devices can be extremely straightforward. Parallels Device Management extends Microsoft Endpoint Configuration Manager (MECM) for unified device administration—IT admins can manage Mac devices along with Windows PCs. This solution improves IT performance, reducing duplicate work and incident resolution time. It's a plug-in that's simple to deploy, requiring no additional infrastructure or training.

9. What do you consider the advantages to be for allowing Mac usage at work?

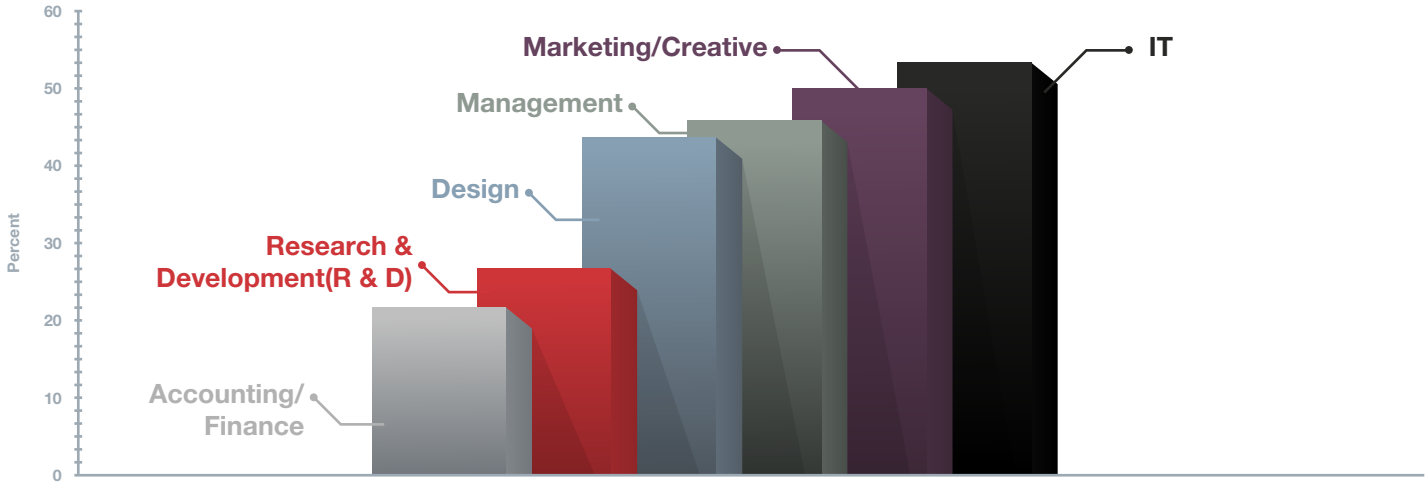


The top perceived advantage of using a Mac device at work is that it provides better performance. Models like the recently released 16-inch MacBook Pro—with maxed-out specs of an 8-core Core i9 CPU, 64 GB of RAM and 8 TB SSD of storage—readily back up that assertion. Specs like these are more than enough to meet the needs of workers whose roles require high-performance computing power.

Security is a close second. Not only are Mac devices perceived to be less vulnerable to malware, but they also have several built-in security features such as Touch ID, FileVault2 drive encryption, Find My Mac and Keychain Access.

Third is the advantage that Mac computers can easily connect with other Apple devices. This is a hallmark of the Apple ecosystem. Employees who own multiple Apple devices can seamlessly share photos, videos, files and even passwords across those devices.

10. Which of your departments use Mac devices?*



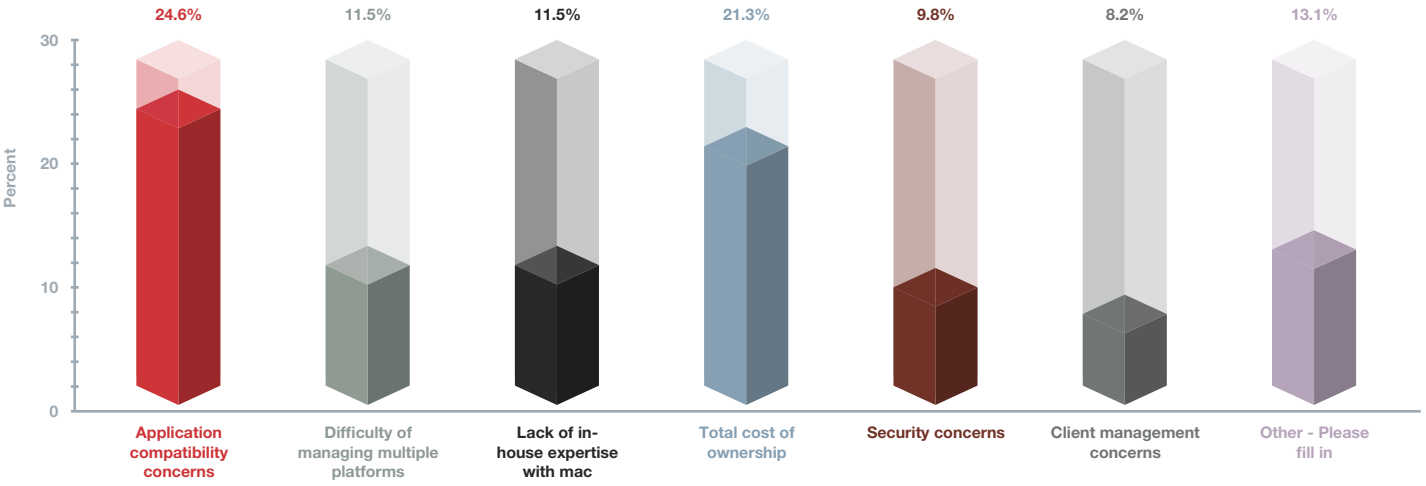
*Select all that apply

The fact that IT leads all departments in Mac usage aligns with the results of Question #9: "What do you consider the advantages to be for allowing Mac usage at work?" Performance and security emerged as the top two advantages provided in the answer.

IT staff are usually the "power users" in an organization, often running virtual machines, applications and processes that demand a lot of CPU and RAM. Compared to other departments, they're also more familiar with cyber threats. Hence, IT staff is understandably more concerned with the security of their own (and the company's) devices.

It's not surprising to find Marketing/Creative and Design among the top users as well. After all, Apple has long been known to design their Mac computers primarily for musicians, graphic artists and other creatives. Members of these departments use video and graphics editing software such as Adobe Premiere Pro, Final Cut Pro and 3ds Max, all of which demand exceptionally high performance.

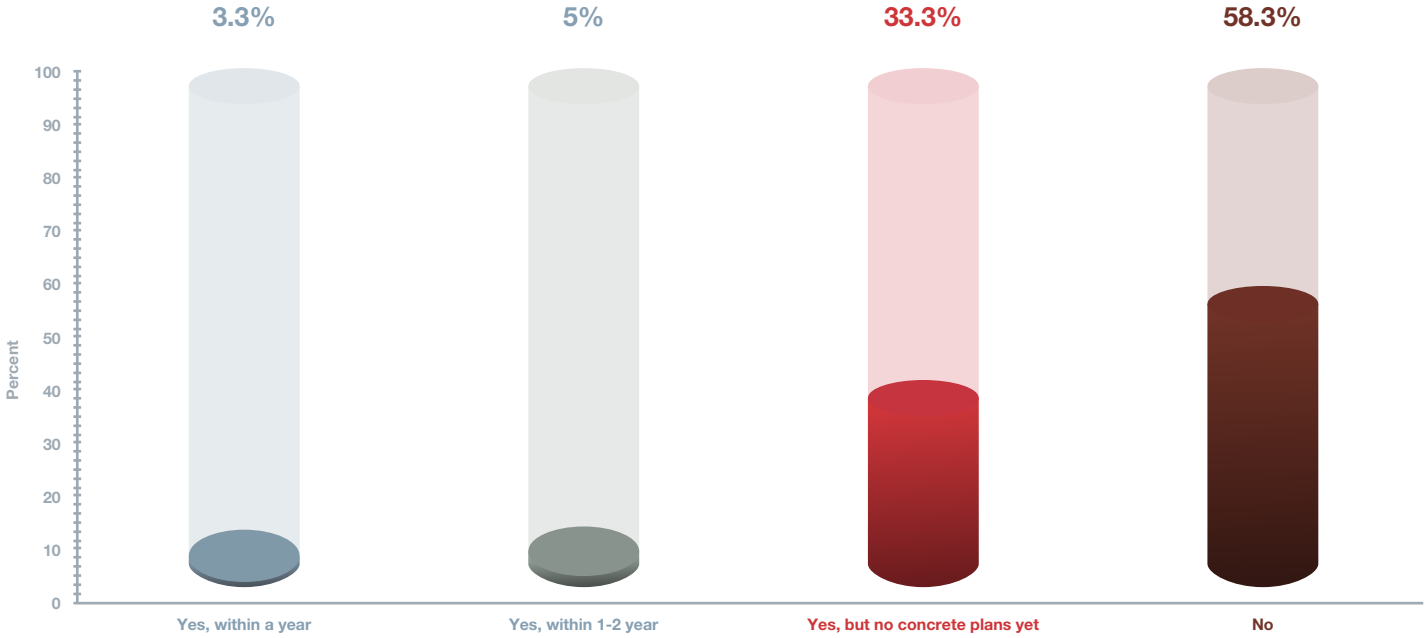
11. If you do not have Mac devices in your company, what deters you from allowing them at work?



The top deterrent for allowing Mac in the workplace is "application compatibility concerns." Businesses worry that they might have difficulty running their Windows-based applications on Mac devices. This problem can be addressed through the solutions mentioned in Question #5.

The second major concern is TCO. Not only are Mac devices considerably more expensive than their Windows-based counterparts, but most companies also don't have in-house talent to oversee these devices. That means in order to manage Mac devices, companies must hire additional talent or train existing staff. Both options require additional costs.

12. If you do not have Mac devices in your company, do you envision allowing them in the workplace in the future?



As the results to Question #12 show, most companies who currently do not use Mac in the workplace intend to keep it that way. This is likely due to the general perception that Mac computers are more expensive than their Windows-based counterparts. In reality, many high-end Windows laptops are now priced higher than Mac laptops, especially those Mac computers that run on new Apple M1 chips (starting at $1,299). Another possible reason is that, because of their limited experience with Mac environments and devices, IT staff are usually resistant to bring Mac computers into their fleet of managed devices.

Conclusion

If this survey is any indicator, there's no longer any doubt: Mac devices have arrived in the workplace and are here to stay. While there's certainly a significant number of businesses still opposed to allowing Mac devices into the organization, it's worth noting that the purported challenges—such as application incompatibility and high TCO—are not insurmountable.

With the right strategy and solution(s), these deterrents can be overcome. Application compatibility concerns can be resolved through virtualization solutions such as Parallels Desktop, VMware Fusion, Parallels RAS or Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops, which allow Windows applications to run on Mac devices.

High TCO can be addressed by picking solutions that have minimal complexity. Solutions that are easy to use and manage can eliminate the need to hire or train specialists, which can be a leading source of unnecessary costs.

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