SoftBank Telecom Corp.

Symantec MAM Provides Leading Telecom Company Greater Security for Mobile App Support Services

SoftBank Telecom Corp. provides Business Concierge Device Management, a mobile terminal management solutions package for corporate customers. Seeking to offer its customers a higher level of security, SoftBank Telecom decided to work in cooperation with Symantec Corporation on mobile application management (MAM).

We provide a 24-hour call center to offer complete assistance to customers for everything to do with their smart devices. Part of this package is device management, which affords customers remote terminal control and all-in-one integrated security setting management capabilities.

Kuniyoshi Suzuki
Director, ICT Innovation Division, Device Management Service Department
SoftBank Telecom Corp.

Offering a level of smart device security beyond the capabilities of MDM

SoftBank Telecom launched its mobile device management (MDM) as part of its Business Concierge services in 2011. Kuniyoshi Suzuki, Director of the Device Management Service Department at SoftBank Telecom’s ICT Innovation Division, explained about the challenges they faced.

Key Challenges

SoftBank Telecom wanted to enable mobile application management (MAM), so that customers using smart devices for business can manage the behavior of applications running on those devices, enhancing compliance and security.

Solution

The company deployed Symantec™ Mobility: Suite because Symantec was the only vendor with application wrapping technology compatible with SoftBank’s mobile device management platform.

Business Benefits

- MAM chosen for greater ability to respond to threats than MDM
- SoftBank-recommended business applications now featured in the Symantec Sealed Program line-up
- Symantec brand power and security expertise enlisted to help SoftBank Telecom in its quest to become the global leader in its field
“Business Concierge is aimed at corporate customers who have smartphone and tablet contracts with us,” he says. “Through outsourcing, we provide a 24-hour call center to offer complete assistance to customers for everything to do with their smart devices, from roll-out and operation to maintenance and management. Part of this package is device management, which affords customers remote terminal control and all-in-one integrated security setting management capabilities.”

“We were aware, though, that MDM did not provide sufficient security for customers using smart devices for business.”

SoftBank Telecom’s MDM services served only as a means of controlling terminals; it did not extend to managing the behavior of the applications run on those terminals.

“We had been aware of the need for mobile application management (MAM), which can manage the applications run on smart devices, for a while,” says Suzuki. “We spoke to a number of security vendors as part of our search for one that had solutions compatible with our services and the wherewithal to work with us on a global scale.”

Choice was based on global brand strength and security performance
Shigeyuki Morimoto, Director of SoftBank Telecom’s Platform Development Department, was involved in the development and selection of systems. We asked him about the factors behind the decision to go with Symantec™ Mobility: Suite.

“There were three main reasons. First was Symantec’s global brand strength as a security vendor: The SoftBank Group’s business strategy is worldwide in its scope, and Symantec was just the kind of global security authority that we need for our services and technologies.”

“The second reason for choosing Symantec was its formidable technological prowess. In particular, when it came to MAM, Symantec was the only vendor with application wrapping technology compatible with our MDM platform.”

“The third reason was that Symantec was able to work with us under a cooperative framework in our preferred style.”

The Platform Development Section focused on Symantec’s MAM solutions, which “wrap” mobile applications for integrated management of policies. Moreover, the use of simple API in the design of those MAM solutions enabled seamless meshing with existing services.

“Business Concierge is designed for convenience, offering a comprehensive range of operations through a web interface we developed,” says Morimoto. “For that reason, when it came to MAM, it was vital that the API was compatible with the services we provided.”

Morimoto praised Symantec’s approach to the project: “Symantec brought its US development team on board to set up a framework that suited our requirements. The hand-over was completed on time and we were able to launch exactly when we wanted to.”
Symantec Sealed Program ensures security of business applications

The MAM service created in partnership by SoftBank Telecom and Symantec had its test launch in July 2014, and already a number of companies have signed up for a free trial.

“The customers that participated in the free trial got to see how apps such as Symantec Secure Email encrypt smartphone e-mail and regulate copy-paste ability,” says Suzuki. “There is also considerable interest in our plan to enable monitoring of secure app usage. In principle, we will offer MAM as a free extra for customers who use our MDM services. In doing so, we aim to lower the barriers to using MAM solutions and having as many of our customers as possible experience their benefits.”

The team-built MAM services enable policies to be set for apps, allow for the distribution and wiping of secure apps, and the wrapping of in-house apps. Wrapping in-house mobile apps after development makes it possible for them to be managed using MAM.

Moreover, apps downloaded from stores must comply with the Symantec Sealed Program, a program under which apps compatible with Symantec MAM are distributed. Apps that conform to the Symantec Sealed Program’s requirements are issued a seal of approval.

Morimoto explained the advantages of the Symantec Sealed Program: “When a customer installs an app downloaded from a store, they can use our MAM service to apply policies such as restricting the ability to copy data.”

Meanwhile, SoftBank Telecom and Symantec plan to work together to increase the number of Symantec Sealed Program compliant apps in Japan and the US, respectively.

SoftBank Telecom seeks to enhance Business Concierge Device Management services

“We have plans to work with Symantec to use MAM as a launch pad for expanded services,” says Suzuki. “For instance, we believe that Mobile Insight, which provides greater visibility into mobile apps, will encourage safer use of apps on Android devices.”

Mobile Insight is an in-depth mobile app analysis tool that shows users an app’s reputation and security status, monitors access to personal information, and even shows the impact of the app on the device’s battery. It will afford users a more secure app management experience.

“Another thing we are looking into,” adds Morimoto, “is validation and ID protection (VIP). Provided as a ‘push’ feature, we believe it will give rise to validation services with the right balance between convenience and security.”

“We also plan to offer Symantec’s anti-virus protection for smart devices. We look forward to strengthening our partnership with Symantec as a means of providing customers with more secure, more convenient platforms for their smart devices.

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Shigeyuki Morimoto
Director, ICT Innovation Division, Platform Development Department
SoftBank Telecom Corp.

For more information:
Contact your local Symantec Sales Representative or Business Partner, or please visit: www.symantec.com/mobility

Symantec World Headquarters
350 Ellis St.
Mountain View, CA 94043 USA
+1 (650) 527 8000
1 (800) 721 3934
www.symantec.com