

android

Managing work and personal data on your Android device



The challenge

Workers need continuous access to work and personal applications on their mobile devices – whether those devices are personally-owned or company-owned – and they don't want to carry two phones. In either the personally-owned or company-owned scenario, IT teams need to enable work-from-anywhere freedom while simultaneously protecting corporate data and personal data privacy.

Managing work and personal data on a single device has turned into a more complex challenge with the expansion of hybrid work in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to research from IDC, in 2024, mobile workers (employees who use mobile devices like smartphones and tablets for work) will account for over 60% of the total U.S. workforce.

The Android Work Profile Difference

Work profile offers a space on Android devices (6.0 or later devices) where work apps are kept separate from personal apps and data. Organizations can manage work apps and data while personal apps, data, and usage remain private. With a work profile, organizations can run two profiles side by side to empower employees to achieve:

Separation


Clear and secure delineation between work and personal apps through separate UI tabs, and isolated data processes and storage

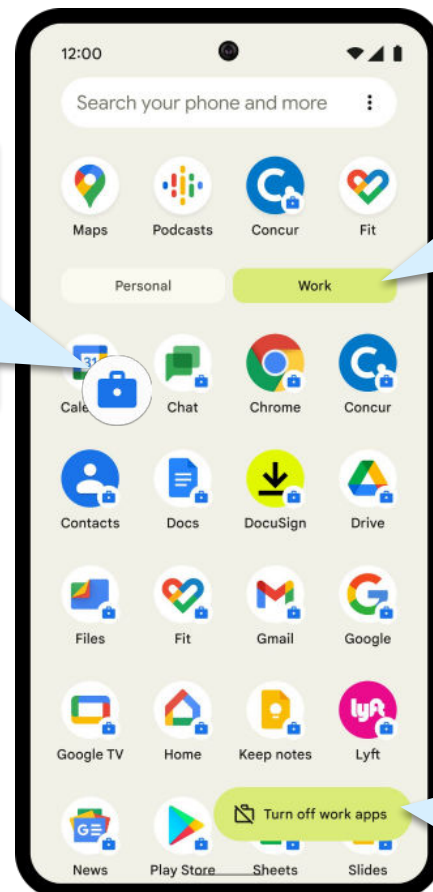
Digital well-being

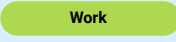
Work-life balance through enhanced employee controls to disconnect from work at night, on weekends and holidays


Productivity

Enhanced efficiency using familiar business tools that people know and trust

 Briefcase badge indicates a work app that contains company data and is managed by IT



 Dedicated work tab organizes all work apps in one area

 Turn off work apps
Pause all work apps and notifications with one click



Separation

Keeping work and personal data separate and secure on a single device remains an ongoing challenge for organizations. Employees seek the flexibility of a single mobile device without having to toggle between two phones. In fact, according to a qualitative study conducted with over 3,000 smartphone users around the globe by the Google user experience team and the Qualtrics experience management firm, 70% of all employees prefer using a user interface (UI) to separate work and personal apps on their device.

Employee benefits

Work profile enables employees to attain that single device separation and privacy. Separation between a user's personal data and work data is enforced at the OS kernel level across processes, memory and storage. Although IT can still manage work apps in the work profile, they cannot see the personal apps, usage and data in a personal profile. For device data that has an impact on privacy (location, camera and mic access), they need employee consent.

With distinct separation of work and personal apps through an intuitive UI using badged briefcase icons, employees are less likely to make mistakes (like sending a corporate or personal email from the wrong account), and more likely to feel confident that their employee information remains private from IT.

IT benefits

IT and security teams can maintain control over a work profile without visibility into personal apps and data. Additional controls and asset management tools help IT teams stay compliant with corporate policies while preserving device and management consistency.

Data separation implementations such as sandboxing and isolation enable IT to manage work data by isolating application data from other apps at every layer. With this level of security focus, IT only needs to view details about the data and apps in the work profile – including which apps access the work profile, network activity and work profile account details – while personal information and activity remain private.



Digital Wellbeing

Having the option to disconnect from work is not only a preference for employees – it is a necessity. However, for a segment of employees who manage work and personal life on a single device, the lines can get blurred, especially working in more of a hybrid work environment.

Given the obstacles for disconnecting, lack of work-life balance has remained the No.1 frustration amongst single device users.

With the work profile, users can achieve greater control over when to pause work and manage their schedule.

Employees can suspend work notifications until they are ready to answer them. In addition, IT admins can toggle work off by policy depending on how devices are managed.

Switching off work mode temporarily disables all work apps from running, syncing in the background, accessing locations and consuming battery life. Users can pause work from their work profile tab or quick settings. They can also schedule the work profile to automatically turn on and off through the digital wellbeing application. The smartphone study shows that work profile users are more satisfied with their work-life balance compared to non-work profile users (70% vs. 63%).

Conclusion

The Android work profile delivers ideal productivity, privacy and work-life balance on company-owned devices and personally-owned devices. Contact an enterprise mobility management (EMM) provider to set up the work profile for company-owned or personally-owned devices.

Productivity

When users are ready to get back to work, they can simply toggle work mode back on and concentrate their focus using familiar productivity and collaboration tools they trust, including Google Workspace apps.

In this dedicated mobile work environment, employees can minimize distractions and take advantage of Google Sheets, Gmail, Google Chat, Google Drive, Google Slides without missing out on the full functionality they expect from their desktop applications.

Additionally, Android 11 introduced work and personal app interoperability and customizable options to enhance workforce productivity. These connectivity features remain in Android 12. Connecting certain cross-functional apps across work and personal profiles can help users fully take advantage of their device to see a holistic view of how work and personal data intersect. For example, by connecting the Google Calendar app, they can view work and personal events together in one unified view to get the most out of their schedules.

Moreover, depending on device ownership, there are options to customize the work profile in a similar way as a personal profile. For instance, work app notifications and ringtone sounds can be differentiated from personal app notification alerts.