

On the Radar: Webalo offers a no-code mobile development platform

Publication Date: 24 Jan 2017 | Product code: IT0021-000231

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Summary

Catalyst

The mobile workforce demands new and more mobilized means of accessing important business applications and data. However, the effort and cost associated with mobilizing important enterprise applications can be prohibitive to many organizations. Webalo supports organizations in overcoming this challenge with functionality that helps modernize legacy IT systems into more usable native mobile apps that have the look and feel of the native interface on whichever operating system the device is running.

Key messages

- New apps can be connected to enterprise data and developed via a self-service administrator console.
- Apps can be created for utilization via smart mobile devices as well as Chrome, Edge, Firefox, and Safari desktop browsers.
- The Webalo platform can be deployed via Amazon Web Services, Citrix Xen, Microsoft Hyper-V, or VMware, single or multitenant, cloud, or behind the firewall.

Ovum view

As mobility increasingly becomes recognized as a vital element of any digital transformation initiative, solutions that can help organizations quickly and easily mobilize important business applications and data are becoming increasingly appealing. Technologies that can help mobilize the workforce and democratize enterprise data for consumption across different devices in a cost-effective manner are of growing importance to organizations. Webalo meets this need by offering capabilities that can help enterprises realize value from a mobility strategy, while also improving workflow management in a secure and authenticated fashion.

Recommendations for enterprises

Why put Webalo on your radar?

As approaches to enterprise mobility mature, more focus is being placed on application management as opposed to just device management. Managing and securing devices remains an important consideration, but increasingly, organizations are better understanding the opportunity apps provide to optimize existing business processes and facilitate new and more efficient ways of working. This shift is also evident in recent Ovum data that shows growth in mobile application management (MAM) and mobile application development platform (MADP) technologies is set to increase. We expect the MAM market to grow from \$1bn in 2016 to \$3.8bn in 2020, and the MADP market to grow by more than 22% over the same period, to \$3.1bn. This growth in app management and development is in response to organizations approaching enterprise mobility in a more strategic fashion – specifically, by recognizing that apps will be fundamental to organizational efforts regarding business process

optimization. The challenge, however, is that investments in legacy applications and systems are vast, and mobilizing them can be both challenging and expensive.

Webalo offers a quick, cost-effective, secure enterprise-grade alternative for organizations that cannot afford to expend the time or money on traditional native or hybrid mobile app development. Rather than developing new individual mobile apps, the solution transforms legacy apps and data by generating native mobile apps that provide users with the real-time support they require to carry out their jobs in more productive and efficient ways.

Highlights

Background

Founded in 2000, Webalo is based in Los Angeles, California, and employs around 25 staff. CEO and co-founder Peter Price has an entrepreneurial background in enterprise software, data, and information management and analytics, and helped to finance, build, and sell four early stage tech start-ups prior to founding Webalo.

The company's aim is to bridge the gap between big data and mobility, providing quick, bidirectional access to applications such as BI and analytics, customer relationship management, supply chain management, or enterprise resource planning on whichever mobile device employees are using. Delivering scalability is a key facet for Webalo, and a key differentiator, given the issues that companies can face when deploying mobile apps on a large scale.

Webalo launched its service in October 2012 and is going to market through a network of channel partners. Verticals in which it has seen strong traction include financial services, industrial, and healthcare – environments in which large numbers of staff need mobile access to enterprise applications and data updates in real time. Early customers include Wells Fargo, RBS, GE, Bell Nursery, and the UK National Health Service.

Current position

The workflows, tasks, and integrations created in Webalo are all accessed via a single universal client app. Webalo connects to enterprise applications and data that organizations rely on and mobilizes the workflows that people engage and interact with. With Webalo, employees can access and interact with company databases, reports, XML web services, and websites directly from smartphones, tablets, and desktop PCs in an optimized fashion. This is a compelling proposition as users can interact with important workflows and undertake work tasks via a single system, eliminating the need to utilize many different enterprise applications to get work done.

Figure 1: The Webalo platform



Source: Webalo

Webalo connects to existing back-end infrastructure and systems, and information between systems can be sent bidirectionally. Webalo's User Proxy Service relies on proprietary algorithms to transform back-end data into device displays that automatically conform to the UI of users' Android, Apple, BlackBerry, or Windows smartphones and tablets. From a security perspective, Webalo relies on existing Active Directory and LDAP permission-based security protocols and supports authentication management systems such as OAuth 2, Windows Auth, Kerberos, and Site Minder. Communications between the systems and data being accessed and the device are encrypted, and data can be set to be non-persistent, removing everything when users log off. Webalo also integrates with popular enterprise mobility management solutions from vendors including AirWatch, BlackBerry, Citrix, MobileIron, and IBM. Through this integration, additional authorizations and authentication capabilities can be leveraged to ensure compliance against an organization's mobile policies and procedures.

Webalo can be delivered via both a native mobile client and a desktop client. The mobile client can be downloaded through the relevant native app marketplaces on smartphones and tablets running on iOS, Android, BlackBerry, and Windows. The desktop client can be accessed via Chrome, Firefox, Edge, and Safari browsers. Webalo works by connecting to applications and data from existing databases, reports, XML web services, and websites and presenting them as mobile interfaces native to the OS from which a user is accessing the service. It has the capability to operate offline and works with applications from a range of vendors, including IBM, Oracle, SAP, Microsoft, and Salesforce.com, as well as custom-built applications. Enterprise app store management functionality is also offered via the solution, with capabilities to deploy, update, manage, and maintain apps.

Webalo delivers its service in two forms:

- Webalo Cloud – a subscription service for an unlimited number of enterprise users. It includes the Webalo Gateway security mechanism, a Webalo administrator-controlled VPN between Webalo's cloud-based servers and the customer's enterprise resources. Pricing starts at \$150 per user per year.
- Webalo Pro Appliance – an on-premise subscription service for an unlimited number of enterprise users. It is delivered as a virtual machine image and runs on virtualization platforms

including Xen, VMware, and Microsoft Windows Server 2008 Hyper-V. Pricing also starts at \$150 per user per year.

Data sheet

Key facts

Table 1: Data sheet: Webalo

Product name	Webalo	Product classification	RMAD
Version number	Webalo 2.0	Release date	October 2016
Industries covered	All	Geographies covered	Global
Relevant company sizes	Midsized to Fortune 500	Licensing options	Subscription/enterprise
URL	www.webalo.com	Routes to market	Direct and global channel network
Company headquarters	Los Angeles, California, US	Number of employees	25

Source: Ovum

Appendix

On the Radar

On the Radar is a series of research notes about vendors bringing innovative ideas, products, or business models to their markets. Although On the Radar vendors may not be ready for prime time, they bear watching for their potential impact on markets and could be suitable for certain enterprise and public sector IT organizations.

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