

# Cisco makes companies more smartphone friendly

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US technology titan Cisco has unveiled a new "Security Without Borders" platform that lets networks be accessed easily and securely from almost any kind of smartphone.

Cisco has unveiled a way for businesses to feel comfortable about letting workers use whatever smartphones tickle their fancies.

While hip new mobile devices such as Apple iPhones or Google's Nexus One smartphones have proven popular with the public at large, businesses have been averse to such devices out of concerns for network security and compatibility.

US technology titan Cisco believes it can put the minds of corporate IT managers at ease with a new "Security Without Borders" platform that lets networks be accessed easily and securely from almost any kind of smartphone.

"Mobile devices are like jewelry; it is a fashion item," Cisco vice president of security products Tom Gillis said while demonstrating the new platform slated for release by July.

"For me to tell you what kind of jewelry to where is just not possible. I need to be able to give you the ability to use whatever device you want."

Cisco built the system on top of its widely used virtual private network (VPN) software used by companies to establish protected links between internal networks and outside computers.

Cisco struck partnerships with handset makers to get hardware compatible with the Borderless platform.

"There is an explosion of new [mobile devices](#) and this is spilling into the enterprise," Gillis said, referring to how workers increasingly want to be able to pick the smartphone they use for business.

The Cisco development could pose a threat to [Research In Motion](#), whose Blackberry has long been the smartphone of choice for businesses owing in part to its advanced encryption software.

The Cisco platform is crafted to instantly establish secure VPN connections for work programs and scan files or links for computer viruses or other hacker mischief.

The system even allows for Web conferencing on smartphones, with connections seamlessly switched to laptops or desktops by a wrist-flick gesture command, Gillis showed while demonstrating with an [iPhone](#).

People's taste in gadgets in their personal lives is beginning to change workplaces, with iPhones cracking the business market with help from high-ranking executives that insisted on using the smartphones.

"You can't tell executive vice presidents they can't have an iPhone," said Cisco chief security officer John Stewart. "It was a very clever way to inject yourself in the enterprise."

Cisco is aiming the Borderless platform at businesses interested in protecting their networks while allowing workers to chose smartphones that will hopefully make them more productive at their jobs.

"You can embrace it instead of trying to hold the water at bay," Stewart said. "I'm actually kind of excited; massive diversity usually ends up making healthy environments."

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