Enabling employee choice and Apple adoption at AFC Bournemouth using datajar.mobi

AFC Bournemouth is a professional football club formed in 1899, currently playing in the Championship. They are based at Vitality Stadium.

AFC Bournemouth has a growing fleet of Apple devices used everywhere from the boardroom to the dugout. Increasingly, staff prefer Apple technology over other offerings and, as a result, their usage has doubled in the past three years. This growth was the driver behind the club's IT team searching for a scalable and secure mobile device management solution.

In this in-depth customer story, Richard Poole, head of IT at AFC Bournemouth, provides insight into how datajar.mobi has helped the football club overcome IT skill gaps, adopt the growth of Apple technology and ensure it stays up to date with the latest security patches on all devices.

- Professional Championship football team

- 65 macOS and 150 iOS, all company mobiles and tablets are iPhones and iPads

- Using datajar.mobi for Apple device management

- Experienced Apple growth of approximately 100 per cent

Can you give us an introduction to AFC Bournemouth and your role within the club?

I have been at the club for more than a decade, during which time the club has risen up through the football league. This has brought with it some fantastic opportunities to develop and expand what we do across the club, particularly where technology is concerned. AFC Bournemouth is a family-friendly community club on the south coast, which makes it a fantastic place to work.

How is Apple technology used within the club?

Apple technology has grown consistently over the past few years, initially starting in our content creation teams for print and digital media; we use the Adobe Creative Cloud Suite extensively in these areas to create video output for afcbTV and also have an in-house brand and design team that generates everything visual you will see connected with AFC Bournemouth. We envisage Apple devices growing into new areas constantly and plan to expand this in the future.

All company mobiles and tablets are iPhones/iPads. iPads are used everywhere from the boardroom to the dugout. Having Self Service available to our users is important for easy app distribution.

We have a small number of Apple TV devices which are used for Airplay/Screen Mirroring to larger displays, along with apps running in house video on demand.

Have you observed growth in the number of Apple devices you manage in recent years?

There has definitely been an increase in the number of Apple devices year on year. More and more staff prefer to have Apple over other offerings. As a result, our Apple devices have doubled in the past three years.

The football club operates across four sites. Our apple estate is circa 65 macOS and 150 iOS. All macOS devices are running Big Sur, thanks in part to the incredible ease of deploying macOS software updates via Self Service.

We are a mixed environment with around 250 Windows clients also in our estate. This means our Apple vs. Windows ratio is around 50/50.

Do you have a dedicated team of Apple device management specialists within your IT function?

We have a very small team of two on the ground at AFC Bournemouth. This contributed to the decision to use datajar.mobi to manage the number of Apple devices we support. Having the support of the dataJAR team in all aspects of our Apple device management means we have no need for in-house experts.

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> *datajar.mobi is like an extension of our IT team. It is like having in-house Apple experts in the next room. It also allows us to learn and develop our skill set knowing we are supporting our Apple technology in the right way.*
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> **"**

Richard Poole, Head of IT

How were you managing your Apple estate before implementing datajar.mobi?

Lots of manual processes. We would try to utilise products such as Nomad but found that, without the expertise required to roll this out en masse, we would end up with a multitude of manual processes to build and support our Apple devices. Achieving the basics was hard with a small team. Now we have datajar.mobi in place, we cannot only achieve these basics but go way beyond and exceed what we would have thought possible. Keeping on top of features such as Filevault and app updates was inconceivable, now we can take these for granted.

What are the main challenges datajar.mobi has helped you overcome?

When we brought in datajar.mobi, we wanted to be able to manage our devices at scale and also keep up with the latest security patches etc. Managing devices manually left gaps that were difficult to ascertain and also resolve. These questions can now be answered in as little as a few minutes with a quick glance at the Simplified Management app, or an email to the dataJAR support team. Enhanced security through Filevault was something we wanted to achieve which is now occurring on all of our builds.

We also had a skills gap that was not cost effective to solve in-house, so having a managed service was an ideal fit for us.

How did you first hear about datajar.mobi?

I recall listening to an episode of MacAdmins podcast (http://podcast.macadmins.org/2017/10/13/episode-55-green-tea-with-datajar/) and became very interested in what was on offer.

How has implementing datajar.mobi changed your Apple device management processes?

Our processes are now a lot more streamlined and simplified. Processes that would take days/weeks into months are now able to be pushed out in a matter of minutes. As mentioned before, now we have datajar.mobi in place, we cannot only achieve the minimum but really excel in how we manage devices and what we offer to users.

Since onboarding the service, we have benefited from many more features, automations and customisations that we had never conceived when we first onboarded.

We now know anything Apple related can be covered by the dataJAR support team, which allows us to push our technology and Apple platforms further, giving the IT team and users more time to focus on other tasks.

Have you received feedback from your end users about their experience? Has there been a visible change to their everyday use of Apple devices?

Users have got to grips with the Self Service app and have been surprised at how quickly and easily we can push out new apps and functionality to their devices. We are able to keep their systems secure and up-to-date without having to take over their device; everything happens in the background and just lets them know when they need to do anything to finalise an update or process.

The ability to deploy and manage MacOS versions and incremental security updates through datajar.mobi means we can ensure all devices are up to the latest version within the parameters we set. We now feel more in control of security and have 100 per cent of macOS devices encrypted with Filevault plus hundreds of updates pushed out weekly, ensuring users are always running the latest versions of their apps.

Ready to find out more about dataJAR? We would love to hear from you.

Chat with our experts

dataJAR
Beyond Device Management

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