

# Lessons from Shadow IT



## SECURITY

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Shadow IT – any tech that employees download to work devices without authorization – causes stress for most executives. After all, you don’t know what risks the tech employees choose to use pose – and Shadow IT **leads to increased risk of** data breaches, regulation violations and compliance issues. If you tackle Shadow IT the right way, though, it can actually be great way to learn from employees about using tech to improve efficiency – and introduce the right private and secure technologies. Here’s why:

### When Employees Use Shadow IT, They’re Telling You What They Need

Employees don’t download tech without authorization to be malicious; usually it’s because they need a tool that **makes it easy for them to get the job done**. Think tools like WhatsApp, Dropbox or Trello – people want to be able to communicate, or share files, or just plan their work more easily. When employees use Shadow IT, they’re telling their employers: this is what I need to get my job done efficiently.

If you find out employees are using Shadow IT, don’t panic and try to shut it down just using harsh measures – that will just cultivate an environment where people are scared to tell you what tech they’re using. Instead, encourage employees to come forward and share what they’ve found useful or what they wish they could do: you might hear “I need something more convenient for sharing my files,” or “I need to be able to contact another employee even if they’re on a phone call.” Then use that information to figure out which technologies you can use to support those same needs and eliminate Shadow IT.

### Shadow IT Shows Innovation

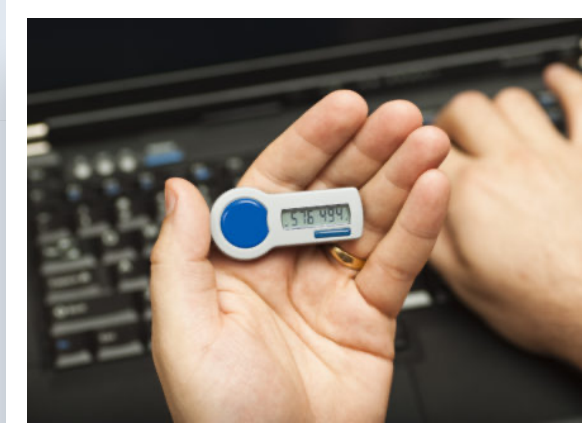
People rarely invent new things by sticking to old methods. Shadow IT can pose a threat to businesses’ security but it also shows how employees can be creative. People aren’t letting themselves get bottlenecked in, they’re figuring out how to use technology to solve problems. The problem is that in the process, they’re letting compliance and security go. Tackling the issue of Shadow IT is an opportunity for you to think outside of the box in terms of efficiency, compliance and security. The tools and behaviors your employees are using may be risky, but there may be ways for you to harness that behavior using similar, secure tech.

### You Can Cultivate the Best of Shadow IT and Address the Worst

If you cultivate a work environment where people feel free to share technologies they come across and talk about what they need to be able to, you can work together to develop solutions to their issues. Be open about Shadow IT – explain to employees how it poses risks and why they shouldn’t use Shadow IT, rather than just telling them they can’t use certain tech “because IT said so”. Meanwhile, encourage people to continue to be creative in to share their needs – *in the context of compliance and security*. This way, employees are familiar with the risks of Shadow IT but feel free to connect with you about their work needs and share ideas for creative solutions to bottlenecks – all while keeping compliance and security in mind.


Compliance, security and efficiency shouldn’t be at odds with each other. That’s why Vaporstream makes it easy to send messages, share files and discuss sensitive information without any risk of information getting compromised. See how we’re used by businesses every day [here](#).

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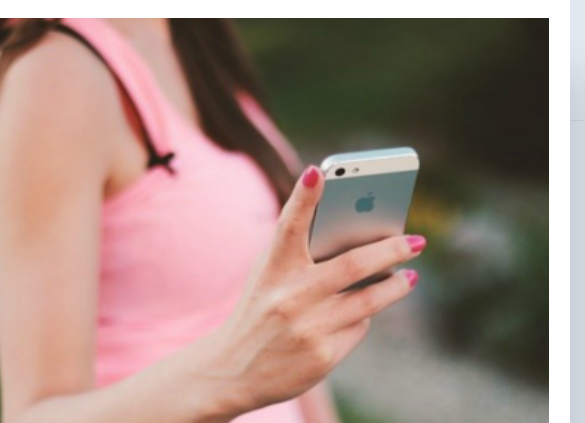
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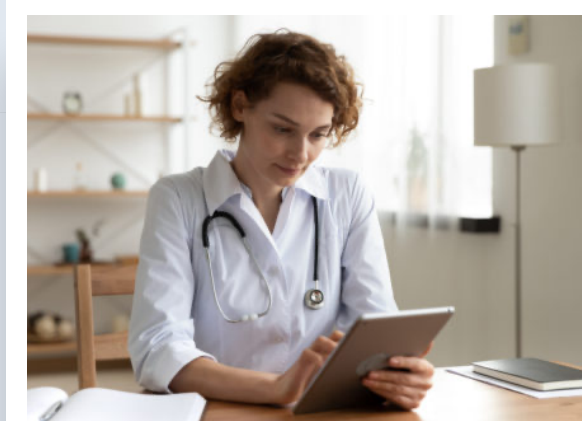
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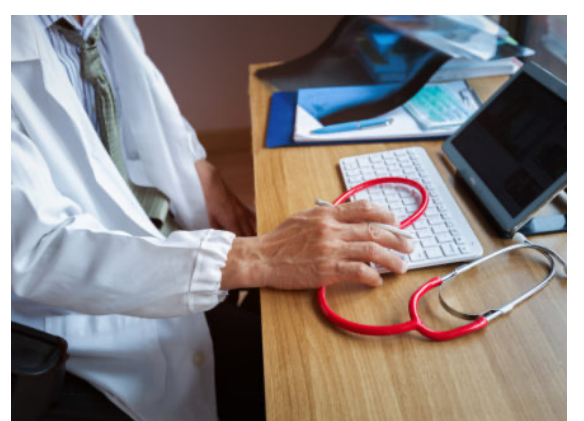
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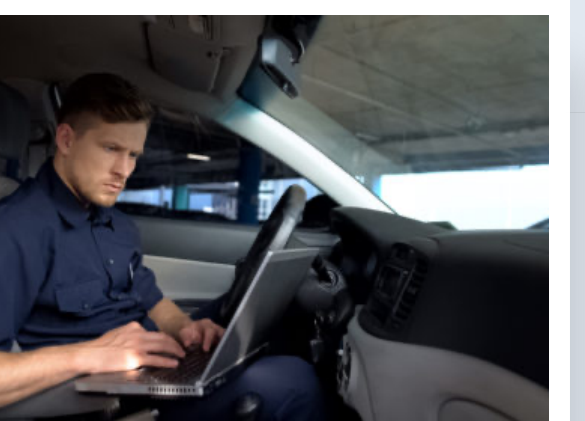
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