



BY ANDY LINK

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## NO TIME LIKE UP TIME

Why ratings for Jersey Shore go up when the Internet is down

**THE OTHER DAY**, my daughter was watching Jersey Shore on MTV at a time when she clearly should have been doing her homework. Normally I wouldn't think twice about it since she's a great student and always does her work. But on this occasion, I asked if she had any homework to do. She promptly responded, "Yes, I have a ton, but I can't do it." Naturally, I asked why? She was quick to inform me that the wireless Internet connection was down and there was no way for her to access her assignments. As a provider of mobile solutions, this conversation reminded me of how a down Internet connection can completely halt a workforce that relies on an on-line mobile application, affecting not only productivity, but your reputation.

Wireless Internet connectivity, for the most part, is highly reliable. Advancements in coverage, security, and bandwidth have resulted in an improved user experience. In concert, mobile web-based, or fully on-line dependent applications have also evolved. They provide real tangible advantages when compared to off-line applications including 24x7 access to mission critical business data from anywhere at any time, centralized set up of administration and security functions, and the ability to streamline deployment and upgrades to mobile devices in the field. As a result, more businesses—from field service technicians performing maintenance and repair work to mobile workers who sell and deliver food, beverages, or other products—are turning to online mobile solutions to increase sales and improve productivity. Unfortunately, the Internet is not perfect and smart channel partners realize that a down connection is inevitable.

As trusted technology advisors to clients, channel partners are looked to for solid recommendations that provide a tangible return on investment. They understand that the inability to

get a wireless Internet connection can manifest itself for a variety of reasons, many of which are out of their control. While empowering businesses to go mobile has been a popular trend, channel partners need to seriously consider the pros and cons of implementing a mobile application that is 100 percent dependent on an always-on wireless Internet connection. What happens on the rare occasion where there is no connection available?

In addition, mobile solutions providers must also take into account the peripherals that are being used with the web-based mobile application. These web-based applications have limitations when integrating with peripherals to scan barcodes, print receipts, or capture signatures. Selecting equipment that can function in either an online or off-line environment is just as important.

Savvy mobile solutions providers take the time to understand the business processes and unique needs of their customers to determine the right mobile solution for their business. A critical element of this process is determining if an always-on Internet connection is really necessary. Whether they recommend a completely online solution, an offline, or maybe a hybrid solution—these solutions providers understand that disruption in day-to-day business is not acceptable to their customers.

Like most issues in the technology industry, there is not one correct answer. That correct answer is always dictated by the needs of the end user client. Ultimately, a channel partner's long term success is based on delivering reliable solutions that best fulfill your customers' needs and deliver a sustainable return on investment. While you may never have a conversation with your customer about Jersey Shore, your customers will always be aware when their mobile solution is not working properly. **VSR**

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