INCREASINGLY FLEXIBLE WORKING PATTERNS DRIVE UP IT AND TECHNOLOGY SPEND ACROSS EUROPE

- 76% of organisations across Europe have increased IT and technology budgets this year
- Increased spend is targeted on providing remote workers with the technology and security required to support remote and frontline workers
- Almost a quarter (24%) of 500+ employee organisations think smart glasses solutions will be implemented in the workplace within the next 12 months

8 May 2018, Neuss, Germany – Toshiba today reveals that IT and technology budgets within European businesses will increase this year for more than three quarters (76%) of organisations. This rise in IT spend is directly linked to the number of remote workers within businesses, with those companies with higher numbers of remote workers indicating greater increases in their investment in new solutions and technologies.

The study of more than 1,000 senior IT decision makers from medium and large organisations, which was conducted in partnership with Walnut Unlimited, demonstrated that priorities for this increased investment are focused on `data security (62%), cloud-based solutions (58%) and improving productivity (54%). When compared to similar IT decision maker research conducted by Toshiba back in 2016, data security has increased in terms of importance (54% in 2016), as has investment in cloud-based solutions, with 58% of organisations considering it a top priority today compared to 52% in 2016.

While all country markets surveyed (UK, France, Germany, Spain and Benelux) saw an increase in IT spend, Spain demonstrated the most significant change, with 86% of organisations indicating an increased IT and technology budget for the next twelve months. Similarly, businesses in the transport and logistics sector were the most likely to have an increased budget (89%), while only 52% of government and public sector organisations noted that there would be a larger spend on IT and technology.

Security concerns and evolving working patterns
Offering employees flexibility in their working patterns continues to be of paramount importance to organisations across Europe. The study reveals that 68% of respondents said they had at least a tenth of their employees work primarily while travelling or in no fixed location.

This increase in flexible working is a clear driver behind the top three investment priorities being data security, cloud-based solutions and improving productivity. When asked about priorities for improving productivity for this increasingly mobile workforce, almost half (47%) of respondents indicated that better employee training was critical, with 43% of respondents stating that more innovative use of digital tools was a priority.
Technology to support remote and frontline workers

To help ensure worker productivity, regardless of where employees are working from, there is a distinct shift in the solutions IT decision makers are rolling out across their organisation. At present, 61% of respondents indicated that they provide laptops for their remote teams and 55% offer business-provided smartphones. However, when asked what devices will be used most over the next three years, smartphones caught up with laptops (both at 38%) and businesses also indicated an appetite for newer technologies such as mobile edge computing devices (10%) and thin/zero client solutions (9%).

Larger enterprises (500+ employees) are set to lead the way when it comes to rolling out wearables in the workplace, with 24% predicting that a smart glasses solution will be rolled out for employees within the next 12 months. This is compared to just 16% of respondents from organisations with 100-499 employees. 82% overall predict that smart glasses will be used within their business in the next three years.

The drivers behind the uptake of enterprise smart glasses use include the arrival of 5G, as referenced by 40% of respondents. Furthermore, 59% of those working in the manufacturing sector stated the hands-free functionality as a key benefit of rolling out smart glasses to employees.

Maki Yamashita, Vice President, B2B PC, Toshiba Europe comments, “While the technologies available to employees are constantly evolving, it’s really interesting to see that the key challenges that IT decision makers are looking to address have remained relatively constant when compared to opinions in 2016. Organisations are continuing to balance how best to achieve the perfect blend of unhindered mobile productivity, while being protected by a robustly secure IT infrastructure. New solutions coming into the enterprise are helping to achieve this, but IT teams need to focus on the varying challenges and benefits for their individual sectors when determining how best to make these solutions work for their business.”

Further results from the study and additional insight will feature in Toshiba research report, which is available for download [here].

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:
Walnut Unlimited conducted n=1,036 online interviews among senior decision makers, in medium and large organisations in the UK (209), France (217), Germany (217) Spain (219) and Benelux (Netherlands and Belgium – 174).
Fieldwork took place between 28th February and 6th March 2018.

Participation in the research was restricted to specific verticals, with a particular focus on engineering, government / public sector, IT, manufacturing, retail / wholesale and logistics.

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