



Understanding the Need for a Remote Support Solution

Learn How You Can Effectively and Affordably Deliver
Anytime, Anywhere Remote IT Support to Your End-Users!

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Introduction

In today's global workplace, it is not uncommon for an organization's employees to be accessing IT resources around the clock. This has led to an increased need for 24/7 IT support. Fast and efficient technical support processes are critical to ensure that your day-to-day operations aren't hindered by IT performance issues, regardless of time or location.

The concept of '**anytime, anywhere IT support**' is here to stay because end-users require support, computers require troubleshooting, and servers require updates and maintenance. Without a remote support solution, technicians need to be physically present at an end-user's computer to troubleshoot and resolve technical issues. This is not only time-consuming and inefficient, it's also costly and not scalable to the demands of most of organizations. Remote support software enables IT pros to overcome time and location constraints and access critical network resources to provide technical support to end-users, anytime, anywhere.

Remote support tools typically include remote control software that allows technicians to take control of an end-user's computer as if they were physically sitting at the keyboard. Some remote support tools also let system administrators perform remote administration tasks, such as restarting services, managing Active Directory® (AD) objects, or viewing and clearing event logs without needing to initiate remote sessions, making remote troubleshooting almost transparent to end-users. Many of these tools also offer in-session chat capabilities enabling help desk and desktop support pros to communicate directly with an end-user while troubleshooting.

Top Reasons IT Teams Use Remote Support Tools

- The consumerization of IT and global business operations commonly require technical support 24/7.
- The 3rd-party remote support tools can be used to manage large networks efficiently from one location at a minimal cost as technicians need not be physically present at each site.
- The operating system's remote administration functions have limited functionality.
- Remote support tools offer extensive support to nearly all IT infrastructure components, such as Active Directory, virtual machines (VMs), and different operating systems including Mac OS X®, Windows®, and Linux® etc.
- Remote support solutions offer additional functionality to provide a better remote-session experience and more control to the IT admin during the session.
- You can improve IT administration operational efficiency and realize time and cost savings.

There's a multitude of remote support tools on the market. How do you identify the right remote support tool for your IT needs? Use the following factors as a guideline:

1. Company size. How many IT technicians will use the remote support tool?
2. Types of platforms/operating systems that need IT support.
3. Simplicity. How easy and intuitive is the tool to configure and use?
4. Scope of the remote tool's administration functionality.
5. Return on investment (ROI). What are the long-term cost advantages of owning the remote support solution?

Evaluating the Right Remote Support Solution for Your IT Needs

It is essential that you choose a solution that is affordable and provides robust and flexible functionality to support end-users wherever they are located—inside or outside the firewall, with or without VPN connectivity. The following sections discuss some factors to help you select the right remote support solution.

The Free vs. Paid Dilemma

Free Tools

Remote access functionality is included with most of the operating systems on the market. For example, Remote Desktop Connection is included with Windows. It uses the Remote Desktop Protocol which enables technicians to access and troubleshoot computers on a network.

Mac and Linux operating systems make use of Virtual Network Computing (VNC), a platform-independent remote access technology based on remote frame buffer protocol. There are also open source tools and services available on the Internet for remote access and remote control. Although these tools are free and available with some operating systems, there are drawbacks to be aware of before you rely entirely on them for your remote support needs.

Limited functionality. Free tools usually offer only remote access functionality and don't have the features included in more comprehensive remote support solutions, such as:

- Remotely troubleshoot Windows computers, perform administration tasks, and control desktops, laptops, and servers.
- Manage multiple Active Directory domains.
- Support end-users from iOS® and Android™ devices.

No technical support or maintenance. Open source free tools do not offer support or maintenance. Therefore, they might not be sustainable as a long-term option for your IT needs.

Paid Solutions

Many 3rd-party vendors offer remote support solutions that are designed to meet the needs of IT admins. These remote support solutions typically include remote control functionality that allows an IT admin to take control of an end-user's computer and perform remote administration tasks from a simple-to-use console. Unlike the remote accessibility that's pre-equipped with Windows, 3rd-party tools have extensive feature sets that allow an admin to manage the IT resources in small organizations to large global networks with multiple branches. These solutions have an array of features that meet the needs of IT admins from all kinds of network and systems environments and organization sizes.

Using a 3rd-party tool also means that you are often entitled to technical support and all the product's enhancements and upgrades. With many 3rd-party vendors available on the market, a customer service and support option is an essential prerequisite for choosing the right remote support tool.

Types of Offerings: Pro Cloud or No Cloud?

SaaS or Cloud-based

SaaS remote support solutions are based on a subscription model which allows users to have access from anywhere. This gives IT admins the ability to remotely support end-users and also manage multiple systems in one action.

- **Security.** While most cloud-based solutions offer the latest security measures, it is important to remember that data exchanged during remote support sessions passes through a 3rd-party gateway or host server. This means that security for these tools is essentially outsourced. This may create compliance issues for organizations with sensitive security needs.
- **Infrastructure.** SaaS and cloud-based remote support solutions require very little investment in infrastructure because the solution provider hosts most of the needed hardware in their own environment.
- **Licensing.** SaaS solutions are typically based on a subscription model which renews monthly or annually. For most SaaS offerings, this means that the remote support software is rented rather than owned by the organization using it. Even though cloud-based remote support services reduce the need for additional investment in infrastructure, the total cost of ownership can be higher than on-premises solutions because of recurring license fees.

On-Premises (Self-hosted) Software

On-premises (or self-hosted) remote support solutions are installed within your IT infrastructure regardless of the location of the systems being supported with it. They could be inside or outside the firewall (through an Internet proxy server) whether they are connected through VPN or not. This helps avoid any security issues related to transmitting data through 3rd-party servers and systems. Unlike most SaaS offerings, self-hosted solutions are not rented and data does not pass through 3rd-party hosts. You have complete control of your data and security.

On-premises solutions were the first breed of remote support solutions on the market. The underlying architecture of many of them has evolved from a peer-to-peer to a more centralized structure with server components. Some of these solutions have also matured to include a broader set of IT admin tools and functionalities in addition to remote connectivity and control.

Beyond simple remote control, some on-premises solutions offer additional systems administration tools that IT pros need for many of their daily tasks. For example, Active Directory management and remote Windows administration tools for troubleshooting remotely without needing full remote control sessions. Logical groupings of these tools together with remote control tools can save a lot of time for busy IT pros.

Remote Support Options with On-Premises Software

- **Inside-the-firewall support:** IT admins can use remote support software on their computers to connect to the client computers within the corporate network.
- **Inside-and-outside-the-firewall support:** In addition to offering support to end-users within the network (inside the firewall), you can also establish secure remote connections to computers located outside the firewall via an Internet proxy.
- **Licensing:** Unlike the SaaS subscription model, on-premises solutions are usually sold via perpetual licensing. This type of license gives users perpetual access to the software with modest annual maintenance costs that include support and/or upgrades to newer versions as they are made available. This significantly reduces the total cost of ownership over SaaS solutions.

What to Look for in an Effective Remote Support Solution

1. Ease of Use

Within a single, simple-to-use administrative console you should be able to

- Establish remote sessions on multiple computers
- Share files with remote users
- Use built-in chat for easy communication
- Take screenshots of the remote desktop during a remote session
- Leverage the benefit of remote administration and remote control functionalities

2. Built-in Remote Control and Screen Sharing

The remote support functionality should allow IT admins to take control of end-users' computers while maintaining the option to let them view the troubleshooting session.

3. Remote Windows Administration & Troubleshooting

Remote administration refers to tasks that IT admins would normally have to do by taking control of a remote computer. Look for a remote support solution that delivers the right tools and utilities to remotely perform Windows administration tasks on end-users' computers and also manage Active Directory objects—all from a single, intuitive management console.

4. On-the-Go Remote Access

IT support technicians often need to provide support even when they are out of the office or during an on-call rotation. Look for a remote support solution that includes mobile remote desktop functionality for on-the-go IT support. Consider tools that allow you to leverage mobile apps and establish remote sessions from your mobile and tablet interface.

5. Security

Security is a core requirement of an effective remote support solution. A [report](#) published by the information security vendor, Trustwave identified remote access as the most widely used method of infiltration to gain access to confidential corporate data in 2012. Given its functionality, a remote support tool can offer easy access to your network if security is not a key component of the solution in use. Give careful consideration to remote support solutions that offer security options such as advanced remote access privilege management and smart card authentication, while using today's top encryption standards.

6. Centralized Management

With larger organizations, managing licenses and users is a complex exercise. A centralized architecture allows for easier user, host list, and license management.

- Simpler deployment and connectivity of remote support software
- An Internet proxy component for secure, outside-the-firewall support
- More efficient management of all users and permissions
- Creation and sharing of a global host list for fast and efficient remote connections
- Activation and control of licenses

7. Pricing and total cost of ownership

Evaluate solutions that are affordable, and at the same time, do not compromise on functionality or security. Compare costs between different vendors' licensing models making sure to compare the initial investment and year-over-year expenditures that can increase with some SaaS offerings.

How DameWare® Can Help

[DameWare Remote Support \(DRS\)](#) from SolarWinds® is an affordable and easy-to-use remote support solution that lets you assist users, anytime, anywhere. No VPN required! DameWare Remote Support includes a host of features that enable a technician to remotely connect to end-users' computers and perform remote administration tasks from an intuitive interface. DameWare offers a powerful collection of systems administration utilities from an easy-to-use interface.

Highlights of DameWare Remote Support

- Provide secure support to end-users located inside and outside the firewall
- Remotely control desktops, laptops, and servers
- Manage multiple Active Directory domains
- Perform Windows administration tasks remotely without having to initiate a full remote control session
- Support end-users from your iOS® or Android® devices
- Centrally manage users, licenses, and global host lists from an easy-to-use administration console.

 **LEARN MORE »**

 **DOWNLOAD FREE TRIAL**

Learn More About DameWare

1. Video: [DameWare Remote Support Product Overview](#)
2. Datasheet: [DameWare Remote Support Datasheet](#)

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[SolarWinds](#) (NYSE: SWI) provides powerful and affordable IT management software to customers worldwide. Focused exclusively on IT Pros, we strive to eliminate the complexity in IT management software that many have been forced to accept from traditional enterprise software vendors. SolarWinds delivers on this commitment with unexpected simplicity through products that are easy to find, buy, use, and maintain, while providing the power to address any IT management problem on any scale. Our solutions are rooted in our deep connection to our user base, which interacts in our online community, [thwack®](#), to solve problems, share technology and best practices, and directly participate in our product development process. Learn more at <http://www.solarwinds.com>.