



NetSupport Manager - Version 10

NetSupport Manager software is now on its tenth version. It still offers the same straightforward graphical remote support interface combined with a wide range of user support facilities as its predecessors.

Three remote operating modes are available, and support personnel can easily switch between "Control", "Share" and "Watch" modes as they operate a remote session. "Control" mode locks out the user's keyboard and mouse, giving the support technician sole control of the system. The user's screen can be blanked out while remotely controlling the system, so that sensitive operations can be hidden.

"Share" mode is a co-operative working mode where both the technician and the user share control, while "Watch" mode allows the technician to observe the user's actions. This can be useful when a user's problem may be caused by the way they operate an application. User support and training can be further enhanced by using the "Show" option to display a support screen to a client.

When used in conjunction with the record and playback functions and the video player software provided, a complete remote-training session can be produced. It is also possible to remain connected to several clients in the same session. Its ability to run conversations between user and support technicians with instant messaging can be extremely useful in

resolving problems, while the file transfer system allows for both routine upgrading and more creative solutions to be deployed. The file transfer system offers a simple three-pane interface, allowing the technician to select items and destinations in a similar way to Windows Explorer. Files can be located and transferred to multiple clients in one operation, but file transfer is not available for Linux systems.

Any remote support system needs strong security features, especially if remote support is carried out over the Internet. Communications can be encrypted using 56bit DES, 64 bit Blowfish, 128 bit Twofish or 256 AES schemes. Passwords and security keys can also be set to ensure that only authorised copies of NetSupport Manager can access the organisation's client computers, an essential precaution against intruders armed with their own copies of the software. Active Directory can be used to validate users, and lists of authorised users and IP addresses can be created to control who can carry out remote support functions. Audit trail data is provided by the comprehensive logging and recording features. The Gateway Redundancy feature provides continuity of service even when the primary gateway system is unavailable.

The software offers support for a wide range of systems, from PC systems running all versions of Windows from 95 onwards and various flavours of Linux including RedHat and S.u.S.E., as well as

Macs running OSX. Mobile computing is not neglected, with improved support for StrongARM processor-based Pocket PC 2003 and Windows Mobile 2003 systems. The software now provides similar features to those available for other Windows clients, including the ability to power off or reboot these devices, start and stop processes, execute scripts and obtain detailed inventory information, as well as device-specific information such as battery levels and WiFi signal strengths. Mac and Linux clients now have new support tools and graphical configuration programs.

The new Vista-style interface has extra features that extend its ability to work on large networks and with a mixed bag of clients. Systems can be grouped into lists and arranged within company hierarchies. Thumbnail display support for Linux and Mac systems is also available, providing the same overview monitoring features as those available for Windows systems. NetSupport Manager's new features ensure that it continues to provide the tools needed to support the increasingly diverse range of hardware and software found on today's networks and according to the company, it is Vista ready. **NC**

Product: NetSupport Manager Version 10
Supplier: NetSupport Software Limited
Tel: 01778 382270
Web site: www.netsupportmanager.com
Price: £3,360 (excluding vat) for a 100 user licence.