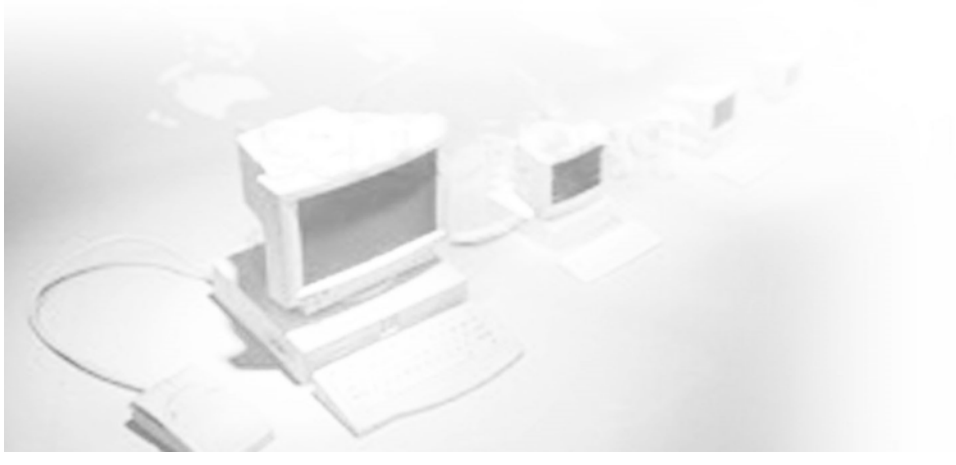
Why You Need Desktop Management Software

Medialand
Comfort Technology Provider

Why do you need desktop management software? Because the benefits provided make such software an essential tool for any organization.

Over the years, certain software tools have become essential to any large or medium sized information technology (IT) organization. For example, almost any organization today has a relational database tool, a network operating system, word processing software or virus protection software. These are tools that have proven to be important, if not essential, to the efficiency and effectiveness of any organization.

Desktop management software is another software tool that has become essential for almost any organization given the importance of the desktop and the many benefits that desktop management software provides. The acceptance of a comprehensive, integrated desktop management software suite as an essential tool for any IT organization has been slower in Asia as compared to elsewhere in the world. This is partly because the ability of desktop management software to reduce manpower costs is often presented as the key benefit, and this benefit is less compelling in countries where manpower costs are very low. However, there are other important benefits of desktop management software that makes it an essential tool even when the benefit of lower manpower costs are less compelling such as offering greater control and security, providing a greater understanding and responsiveness to end-user needs, and allowing the IT organization to better support end-users.



The Importance of Managing the Desktop

The proliferation of personal computers across organizations and the computerization of the desktop has brought with it many benefits in terms of business efficiency and productivity. The number of PCs and workstations deployed in organizations has been consistently growing, often at double-digit rates. The growing number of desktop workstations combined with growing complexity has driven distributed computing past the mainframe as the largest area of infrastructure cost. As a result, organizations across Southeast Asia have made large investments in their desktop systems, applications and networks.

Managing the desktop is an essential part of managing an enterprise's technology resources.

It is important for organizations to understand, examine and manage the many inter-related and inter-dependent costs involved in bringing computing resources to end-users within an organization. These costs not only involve direct costs such as hardware, software and services, but also involve indirect costs such as training, end-user self support, downtime and productivity losses.

Managing the desktop is an essential part of managing an enterprise's technology resources, and is an important part of ensuring that organizations maximize their return on investment from desktop-related spending. This is especially true given that the 'personal computer' on each person's desk in most organizations is really an enterprise computer providing access to enterprise-wide computing resources. As a result, it is imperative that organizations looking to improve efficiency and reduce costs across the enterprise place a high priority on managing the desktop environment.

In short, the desktop is a very important asset that needs to be managed to ensure that resource is maximized. The desktop is often the most difficult part of the corporate IT system to effectively manage, monitor and maintain, and so it is an area where tools can be especially helpful. Desktop management software gives managers a tool that can ensure that the desktop environment is effectively managed.

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Key Steps to Better Desktop Management

According to many leading industry analysts and consultants, there are some key steps that organizations should take to better manage the desktop. These include:

- ✓ creating and maintaining an accurate, up-to-date inventory of desktop IT assets, including both hardware and software. Obviously, an accurate inventory of resources and how those resources are being used is essential to managing those resources. And, an accurate inventory of software that is regularly updated is especially important for license management and software piracy prevention.
- ✓ improving efficiency by remotely controlling clients and distributing software. This allows support and help-desk staff to manage, monitor and maintain PCs across the organization without leaving their seat.
- ✓ monitoring how PCs are being used. This provides an accurate understanding as to how clients are being used, helps identify and control improper use of corporate assets, and helps management to optimize resources and training.
- ✓ keeping things simple. Higher costs and reduced efficiency often accompany greater complexity. As a rule of thumb, simple solutions that are easy to use and easy to implement offer shorter payback periods than more complex solutions.

The Benefits of Desktop Management Software

Desktop management software gives managers the tool they need to effectively implement these key steps. It has become essential tool for almost any organization given the importance of the desktop and the many benefits that desktop management software provides. These benefits include:

- ✓ improving the efficiency not only of the IT organization but of the enterprise as a whole
- ✓ reduced costs
- ✓ greater control and security
- ✓ providing the IT organization with a greater understanding and responsiveness to end-user needs
- ✓ allow the IT organization to better support end-users

Lower Costs

Desktop management software is designed primarily to help organizations improve efficiency, and improved efficiency usually results in lower costs. Most organizations that have implemented desktop management software have reported improved efficiency and effectiveness with the IT department, as well as productivity improvements on the part of the desktop users themselves. Often, these gains can be dramatic.

For example, a large Asian company with about 3,000 PCs in offices spread across a wide geographic area installed *TCO!stream*. Their entire investment, including both hardware and software, came to US$186,834. Their direct hard-dollar savings in the first year came to US$349,278 while the savings in indirect costs, including productivity improvements, added up to US$599,626. So, the total savings in the first year came to US$948,904. And, those savings are ongoing!

A reduction in costs and improvements in efficiency as a result of installing desktop management software can come from:

Reduced Training Costs: The Remote Control feature allows staff to be trained remotely and makes training easier. This translates into reduced training costs.

Reduced On-Site Visits: Technical staff can service and maintain desktop systems remotely, usually resulting in a significant reduction in the number of on-site visits that need to be made by headquarters IT staff.

Optimized Resources: As a result of better understanding the resources in place and how they are being used, those desktop resources can be optimized.

More Efficient Help Desks: Help desks are important to helping uses take full advantage of desktop resources. Desktop management software makes help desks more efficient and can significantly reduce the cost of operating a help desk.

Lower Telephone Bills: Fewer service calls translates not only into improved efficiency but also much lower telephone bills.

Lower Software Distribution Costs: The cost of managing and distributing new software and upgrades can reduced dramatically – often by two-thirds or more – as a result of using the software distribution feature of desktop management software.

Greater Control

More information equals better control. Desktop management software gives managers the information the need to ensure control over desktop resources.

One important element of managing the desktop is to ensure the implementation of standards. Having lots of different software running on different computers results in incompatibility which, in turn, will result in time and money spent on constant upgrades. Implementing and maintaining standards requires that the organization is able to quickly and effectively inventory the desktop hardware and software within the organization. If standardized software is running throughout the organization then upgrades will be easier to facilitate and time will be saved.

Improved Security

Effective security requires effective control. Without one you cannot have the other. For many organizations, control is compromised and a weak link in the security chain is created when they rely on the users of technology to install security patches and keep anti-virus tools updated. If one individual fails to install the latest security patch or to keep their virus definitions current then the whole organization can be compromised.

Desktop management software allows managers to ensure that the latest security patches are installed quickly and properly and that anti-virus applications and definitions are kept up to date. They need to be able to do this quickly, efficiently and remotely.

With desktop management software, managers can ensure that every desktop can effectively deal with the new viruses as they come out, and that the latest security patches are applied. With desktop management software, managers gain control and no longer need to rely on individual users – the weak link – to keep definitions current.

Better Able to Support Users and Meet Their Needs

Desktop management software provides management with details as to what is on user desktops and how those resources are being used. That information is important in helping management adjust training, support and procurement to maximize those resources.

Desktop management software also provides for remote troubleshooting, training and support, resulting in a greater responsiveness to user needs. The automated software distribution capability of desktop management software can also enable a much more frequent change cycle. It can be used to

upgrade applications, operating systems, utility software, as well as "patches" to troubleshoot software problems and update data files.

Case Study

A leading telecommunications service provider in Asia, with tens of thousands of PCs throughout their operation, saved millions of dollars a year by implementing a solution to help them better manage TCO. A couple of years ago they decided that they badly needed a solution to reduce the management cost of all these desktops.

The Solution: Desktop management software (*TCO!stream* from Medialand) was employed across all group companies and desktops. The modules utilized to solve these problems were; remote control, software management (installation, distribution and version control) and asset management.

The remote control application was used for remote diagnostics. The asset management module allowed for comprehensive inventory management across the organization, which facilitated for PC asset consolidation, management and the reporting and prevention of illegal software being used by employees. With the software management module all new software and applications could be automatically distributed and installed from a central location.

The Environment: Client PC OS - Windows 3.1, Windows 95/98/ME, Windows NT/2000: Management Sever OS -Windows NT 4.0 (S/P 6)/Windows 2000; Network Protocol - TCP/IP

The total system installation time was less than 30 days with most modules taking just a day or two to implement.

The Objectives: The objectives of the project were largely four-fold:

- Reduce costs (improve efficiency)
- Increase end-user satisfaction (provide high quality support services)
- Increase end-user and business productivity
- Standardize the PC environment

Quantitative Results: The telecoms company quantified the savings from using *TCO!stream* as follows. The annual saving in reduced ITC costs was quantified at almost $2.5 million, including savings of over $1 million from reduced remote service calls and over $1 million in savings from improved software installation and management. The annual savings does not include two large, unquantifiable variables: finding illegal software and productivity increases.

Qualitative Results: The following qualitative results were achieved.

Item	Previous	New	Expected Result
Average time for remote diagnostic	117 minutes per incident	60 minutes per incident (target: 30 minutes.)	Reduced end-user dissatisfaction
Asset Management	Manual Process	Automatic Inventory information	Reduced time/cost
Software Upgrade	On-site Visit	Automated Distribution	Reduced time/cost
Problem Log	-	Problem management by historical records	Prevent repeated problems
Statistics & Analysis	24+ hours (manual process)	Less than 10 minutes.	Problem trend analysis
Processing Capability	Low (23%)	High (60%)	Reduced manpower

About Medialand

Medialand is a company focused on helping organizations significantly reduce desktop management costs and greatly improve the efficiency of their computing environment. Medialand provides products and solutions -- such as *TCO!stream* and *TCO!helpdesk* -- that give organizations the tools they need to effectively manage and reduce total ownership costs.

TCO!stream is an advanced desktop management solution that manages client PCs in a TCP/IP based network environment and enables organizations to effectively implement best practices. *TCO!stream* provides all the tools necessary for IT professionals to easily and effectively manage, maintain and monitor their desktop environments. *TCO!stream* is a powerful tool -- delivering powerful inventory, metering, deployment, monitoring and reporting capabilities -- yet is also extremely easy to use and implement.

For more information, go to: www.medialand.net