REMOTE SUPPORT AND ACCESS SOLUTIONS

– Key Considerations –

As the coronavirus (aka COVID-19) continues to spread around the globe, many companies have fast tracked policies to accommodate remote working and minimize its impact on productivity. The increased number of remote workers has amplified the necessity for remote support of employees with or without organizationally prescribed IT assets (e.g., workstations, notebooks, VPN connections, etc.). IT staff can no longer simply visit a user's desk at the office, and phone only support can be problematic when secure admin passwords must be used to facilitate software installation for locked down systems.

While some may see the increase of remote workers as an aberration, expecting many to return to the office, the number of employees that continue to work from home, whether full time or through a hybrid part time model, will ultimately be higher compared to pre-pandemic times.

IT help desk solutions that facilitate remote support and access (e.g., Zoho Assist, TeamViewer, LogMeIn Rescue, Chrome Remote Desktop, Splashtop SOS, ConnectWise, and Control Support) allow technicians to provide assistance to at home employees (or end-customers), while simultaneously allowing employees to access (if permitted) any device within an organization from their own home; ideally reducing resolution times.

The focus here is on two of the top players in the remote support and access solution segment, LogMeIn and TeamViewer, whom are able to suitably address larger organization requirements. The following provides a brief introduction to their respective offerings, which sets a basis for the following comparative assessment.

- **TeamViewer** provides remote support and access solutions through the TeamViewer service, which is intended for both small and large teams. TeamViewer Tensor adds a cloud-based component intended to address the needs of larger scale support workloads, adding SSO, mass agent deployment, ServiceNow Enterprise integration, conditional access, a service queue, and more. TeamViewer Pilot provides a remote support solution that implements augmented reality tools and features for mobile support through live video recording.

- **LogMeIn** provides remote support and access solutions through LogMeIn Rescue. Built for the enterprise, it enables customization to mimic corporate branding, provides additional security features to protect customer reputations, with detailed reporting and long-term audit archiving, all without a requirement for pre-installed software. This extends to Rescue Live Lens, which provides browser-based interactive video support with zero downloads so field agents or customers can quickly get into a support session through a single click.

While implemented differently, these solutions are functionally comparable in many ways (e.g., ease of installation, user management, encryption, file transfer, AD/SSO integration, CRM integration, mobile support, etc.). Since individual customer requirements can vary significantly, the following is meant to focus on some of the core areas of differentiation that may play a role in the decision making process for prospective customers.

1 Technician and Support Staff Productivity

Productivity Tools

While these types of products generally have easy to learn UIs and provide quick processes to set up connected sessions with end users, a technician's experience is largely dictated by metrics such as average resolution time, end-user satisfaction, and perceived ease of providing support. These can be positively impacted by removing the need for additional inputs, offering automated tasks at the "click of a button" that simplify repetitive manual processes. For example, scripts provide an essential tool that both Rescue and TeamViewer provide in their respective technician consoles. Scripting tasks that a technician may need to perform often across multiple support sessions can drastically reduce the average resolution time and simultaneously contribute to increased customer satisfaction. In both vendor cases, scripts can be selected from the technician's support window.

Similarly, both Rescue and TeamViewer solutions provide a file transfer system and UI that display the file trees for both technician and end user systems. As needed (and given appropriate permissions), files can be transferred (via drag and drop) both ways to facilitate support that might require software to be transferred over to the end-user system. Other commonly notable features include: reboot and reconnect, aiding in restarting the device without the need to manually reconnect; session history and notes to keep track of an end-user and provide information for future sessions (i.e., reminders or for other technicians) where a full ticket tracking tool is not used; allowing technicians to share their screen; support for multiple sessions to facilitate support of multiple end-users simultaneously; smartphone and tablet support; etc. Discussed later, augmented reality using mobile device cameras can also increase productivity in remote physical device troubleshooting.

Channels or Service Queues

While both vendor solutions provide similar functionality for user (i.e., technician) and group management, service queues or channels facilitate additional alignment between end users or computers with the most appropriate technicians, enabling quick starting of sessions for those waiting for service support. While similar in theory, in practice TeamViewer service queue cases expire after 24 hours of not being closed. Comparatively, Rescue channels do not expire, making it more useful for providing quick and recurring services to a certain group of customers for a prolonged period. In this instance, TeamViewer would require new service cases to be created each time.

CRM Integration

As standalone solutions, these offerings provide the necessary functionality to provide remote support and record session details. However, additional integration helps improve technician productivity reducing the steps to review customer/user details, prioritize cases based on support packages, initiate support sessions, and record efforts. For example, integration with Salesforce and ServiceNow allows technicians to launch support sessions directly from within the respective case UIs, synchronizing all chat dialog, session history, and notes from sessions for easy cross reference within a single UI rather than certain pieces being siloed.

While both vendors can provide integration functionality here, prospective customers need to be aware that in some cases additional licensing or specific solution components (e.g., TeamViewer Tensor) may be required. For example, with Salesforce, LogMeIn Rescue (remote support/control/chat and history) offers a free subscription vs. a paid subscription with TeamViewer to access these features. Both LogMeIn and TeamViewer support incidents and cases in ServiceNow, however, LogMeIn has the two separated into different applications whereas TeamViewer uses one application for both incidents and cases.

Other integration capabilities that often prove beneficial for productivity, whether the technician directly or overall administration, include: single sign-on (although available to all Rescue customers, it is limited to TeamViewer Tensor customers); Active Directory, to sync users with technician groups; and any other organizational relevant incumbent applications (e.g., FreshService, Microsoft Dynamics, Microsoft Intune, Microsoft Teams, Splunk, Zendesk, etc.).

Reporting   Reports allow administrators and business managers to view live and summary reports of technician statistics and activity, as well as user satisfaction levels based on performance metrics. Depending on the solution, this can include customer survey reports, performance reports (e.g., find technicians with the longest sessions, average work time, number of sessions per hour, total active time, etc.), session reports, chatlog reports, and more. Both vendor solutions provide administrative and reporting functionality through the respective LogMeIn Admin Center and the TeamViewer Management Console. In general, report output can be generated in HTML, Excel, CSV, etc. LogMeIn Rescue however, is noted as providing more options for reporting, such as creating reports for different users and having the ability to choose different report types, and the amount of detail available for sessions. However, depending on the prospective customer requirements, this may not be pertinent.

Reliability and Availability   In short, a lack of availability for any solution means that productivity screeches to a halt. While these types of solutions typically require a technician client to be downloaded and installed, the server components are offered through a Software as a Service (SaaS) model. Through carrier-grade datacenters, both vendor solutions can scale as necessary to meet peak demands, supporting thousands of technicians at once. However, the ability to scale is not the same as availability. Reviewing the past 15 months (at the time of writing), LogMeIn had fewer unplanned service interruptions (9 vs. 19). While not total service outages, TeamViewer has had multiple connectivity issues over the past year where some users were not able to access TeamViewer services. These types of issues occurred in January 2020, March 2020 (3 occurrences), June 2020, August 2020, September 2020, January 2021, and March 2021. Phone system issues also occurred in December 2020 (2 occurrences) and January 2021. Other documented issues included: ability to access TeamViewer online services, delays with service emails, issues with custom modules, degraded performance, issues with management console and Web API, log in issues with online services, and issues with web monitoring where page load and transaction monitors failed. Tolerance here will be variable between individual organizations.

2   End User / Customer Ease of Use and Overall Satisfaction

Ease of Use   Technicians will deal with the respective UIs on an ongoing basis, becoming more fluid regardless of the learning curve—although in both of the example vendor cases these are relatively shallow. The same cannot be said for the end user UI, which needs to be as intuitive as possible so technicians aren't required to spend an inordinate amount of time walking end users through agent download, installation, and connection initiation. While both provide relatively easy to use UIs for end users, there are a few key differences.

Download and Installation   Where employees have prescribed IT assets, pre-installed support software is not a foregone conclusion, whether provisioned as an initial system image or maintained through, for example, Windows group policies. End customers of, for example, service providers however, are less likely to have any required support software already included on their systems or mobile devices. Any requirement to download and install specific software can be a hindrance delaying mean time to resolution and decreasing customer satisfaction,

particularly for the more general population, which increases exposure to the technologically inept.

To address both employee and customer scenarios, TeamViewer provides two software downloads, the richer Remote Control software that would already be installed, providing quick access to technicians that have previously established connections, and the separate easier to use "QuickSupport". The latter provides a separate downloaded application that does not require installation or administrator permissions to initiate a remote connection, but also does not provide the full functionality of the larger installable client. Comparatively, LogMeIn Rescue does not require end-users to pre-download software, but automatically downloads the necessary applet as part of the process when establishing a support session connection.

TeamViewer's pre-meditated download requirement also extends to support for mobile devices, where TeamViewer Pilot requires an app download, while LogMeIn Live Lens runs in a browser rather than a dedicated app. Also, worth noting is that LogMeIn Rescue also supports full technician functionality without the requirement of an agent application installation, meaning that remote (i.e., working from home) technicians using personal computers can still provide remote support to end users in emergency situations without having to install the full technician console. While TeamViewer does have a web client available via its management console to remote connect and support, it provides limited functionality compared to the full client.

End User Initiated Connections

Only after the necessary TeamViewer software is downloaded (and installed), can a remote connection be initiated, using an ID and passcode that the end-user must relay to the technician. Comparatively, LogMeIn provides four different connection methods (i.e., 6-digit PIN code, an email with link, a direct link to the applet download, or SMS message) to help speed up the process of starting a support session; selecting the method that best suits the end user.

It should be noted that for frequent support requirements, both vendor solutions provide methods to ease subsequent connection requirements. More specifically, TeamViewer technicians can add an SOS short-cut to an end-user's desktop, while the full technician client can view when client systems are online, initiating a connection. LogMeIn provides a calling card feature that similarly can add an application to a device to provide an easier way for end users to connect to a technician in the future, either via 6-digit pin or (for higher priority individuals) automatically connecting to a channel to await a technician.

Remote Permissions

Regardless of connection methods used to initiate a remote connection, it is ultimately initiated by the user, providing expressed permission for a technician to access their system. While this may not be an issue in a trusted employee environment using business supplied assets, random end-customers looking for support may be more skeptical. While both vendor solutions allow administrators to change the permissions of various technicians and technician groups (e.g., permissions for access and control in remote sessions), TeamViewer end users can also create customized settings for incoming connections depending on the number of permissions they want to grant to individuals accessing their computer. This of course would require the full client installation and a certain level of end-user proficiency, potentially negating any consideration in this regard. It does however, provide a segue to the broader concern around security.

3 Security and Safety for End Users and Private Data/Systems

End to End Encryption

Protection of data in motion and at rest are standard starting points of security scrutiny. LogMeIn and TeamViewer both meet industry standards in terms of basic security as well as encryption and 2FA (two factor authentication) features. The encryption of both products consists of end to end 256-bit AES encryption and RSA public/private key exchange, use of TLS 1.2 for communication between endpoints, and employ industry standards such as SOC Type 2, GDPR, ISO27001 and HIPAA.

Controlled Access

To help protect organizations from misuse or unauthorized connections to the selected solution, both vendor offerings support access control restricting the end systems to which technicians can connect, and the incoming connections that an end user or system will accept. For example, TeamViewer conditional access is a rule engine (available with Tensor) used to enforce remote session, file transfer, and meeting access rights at the account, group, and device levels. The issue however, is where technician credentials might be compromised. LogMeIn's support for IP filtering helps protect against this scenario, rather than simply relying on account based access control.

Using IP filtering, LogMeIn can restrict both end-user and technician access. For example, this can restrict technicians to only support customers within a specific IP range; preventing access to any other devices/servers. Obversely, this could allow end user support from only specific Rescue accounts. Similarly, this could also restrict the location from which technicians can log into the Rescue console; protecting scenarios where technician credentials may be compromised.

Rather than blocking by IP address, TeamViewer allows and blocks accounts, specified by administrators. Block and safe lists allow administrators to specify access to only specific partners. For example, whitelisting all accounts for the organization (based on email domain) means that all connection attempts from other accounts outside the company will be blocked, even if they know the TeamViewer ID and the password of the target system. Organizations would need to separately (i.e., manually) restrict IP access at the firewall(s). TeamViewer only initiates outgoing data connections through a firewall, so organizations can block all incoming connections. Organizations can also use PTR records that resolve to teamviewer.com to further limit destinations through the TeamViewer outgoing port.

Customer Protection (from Malicious Actors)

While granular access management, trusted device authorization, block and safe listing, and user access control help protect organizations and their end-users from malicious actors, what about end-customer scenarios where IP addresses are more variable with larger pools, being impractical to implement a pre-meditated filter based on IP address? Here, LogMeIn Rescue provides additional facilities to protect end users from malicious actors mimicking the company organization through similar domain names and website scraping; including protecting against social engineering scenarios where end customers might not otherwise know better (e.g., consumer customers vs internal IT/employees). This includes features such as ensuring pin codes—to initiate support sessions—actually originated from the company (and not a malicious trial account generating pin codes), ensuring the domain of the webpage where pin codes are entered is valid (and not a copycat), and that standard or trial Rescue accounts cannot connect to enterprise customer accounts. In this way, companies can protect end customers or increasingly globally dispersed employees in larger multinational organizations.

Audit Trails	If there is ever an issue or dispute, both vendor solutions can use audit trails that keep a record of events, chats, and more. This allows organizations to review sessions if needed for issue resolution. There are a couple points of differentiation between these vendors however. More specifically, event logging and audit trials are default settings in LogMeIn Rescue, while optional in TeamViewer. Capturing historic event logs and 4 years of data retention of historic data is automatic in LogMeIn. Event capturing must be activated in TeamViewer and data is only retained for up to one year and must be extracted to another system if needed beyond this time frame; creating an operational and possible compliance burden for organizations.

4 Enterprise and Additional Scenario Support

User Management	As support teams grow to address the needs of an increasingly dispersed clientele, either organizational employees working from home or an increasing customer base, administrators need the facilities to manage these larger teams. Here, both vendors provide similar user management functionality, albeit delivered in a different format.
	TeamViewer uses a browser-based Management Console for user management, where specific permissions can be given to user groups or single users. Administrators can add, edit, and remove users, while also changing the various permissions and rights of users from the Management Console. This includes placing various users in different computer and contact groups for easy mass management.
	LogMeIn Rescue has an administration center where specific permissions can be given to user groups or single technicians. Rescue however, utilizes an Organization Tree which could match the structure of the organization. Administrators can change the Organization Tree by creating and managing new technicians and technician groups as desired.
Packaging and Pricing	One of the most obvious questions is always "what's this all going to cost?" While a deep cost analysis was not conducted based on the variable requirements of organizations and closed-door discounts, it is worth noting that the TeamViewer pricing model seems significantly more complicated than the Rescue pricing model, which can be a significant pain point for customers.
	TeamViewer has several add-ons such as TeamViewer Backup, TeamViewer Monitoring & Asset Management, TeamViewer Web Monitoring, TeamViewer Meeting (50, 100, and Company), TeamViewer Assist AR Lite, and more, which can significantly increase the price of TeamViewer. In addition, Tensor has limits (e.g., number of concurrent sessions per concurrent user, number of in-session scripts/automation, number of service cases created per hour, number of managed devices, agent count, etc.) that depend on the Tensor license plan. Similarly, the SDK and integrations (e.g., Salesforce) are available at an additional cost.
	All these additional add-ons can drastically change the price of TeamViewer depending on the customer's specific software needs. In contrast, Rescue only has a mobile support upgrade that makes its pricing straight forward and predictable, while also providing all the necessary services under that one price. While TeamViewer does provide add-ons outside the scope of remote support (e.g., Meetings), LogMeIn often provides separate dedicated solutions (e.g., GoToMeeting), which if required, will need to be assessed appropriately.
Chargeback / Billing Rates	One unique feature (in regard to these two vendors) worth mentioning is the ability for TeamViewer to create different charge rates that can be applied to different computer and contact groups. A charge rate allows the organization to charge a certain amount for certain

connections. This could be used, for example, for Managed Service Providers to charge different rates depending on contract negotiations, different support levels, or those providing support for multiple entities. An administrator can also manage the billing of various sessions in a certain group through TeamViewer's reporting facilities. LogMeIn Rescue does not currently provide this type of billing functionality, but similar scenarios may be addressable manually thanks to Rescue's detailed reporting (and export) facilities.

Mobile Support

As alluded to earlier, both vendors enable support for mobile devices. This increases scenario versatility supporting iOS, Android, and Blackberry. The biggest differentiator is that TeamViewer provides support for mobile-to-mobile support sessions on iOS and Android whereas LogMeIn only provides support for desktop-to-mobile. TeamViewer also provides a Microsoft Intune partnership, with a seamless plug & play connector and Mobile Device Management functionality via Intune.

Virtual / Augmented Reality

TeamViewer Pilot is a remote support solution that implements augmented reality tools and features to provide support through a live video recording using a mobile device's camera. Its focus is to support others as if the technician were on-site. One feature that helps achieve this goal is "3D Object Tracking" for annotations, which attempts to keep them in place even if the camera is moved around. TeamViewer Pilot can be used with a video camera but also with select smart glasses products.

The issue however, is that TeamViewer Pilot requires both parties to install additional software where LogMeIn Live Lens initiates access through standard mobile browsers (i.e., no additional software needs to be installed). While both vendor solutions are otherwise similar in a number of areas, LogMeIn does provide a few extra annotation tools but does require enabling annotation mode, which freezes the screen compared to Pilot's augmented reality perspective.

Unattended Remote Access

Finally, both vendors provide remote access solutions, which can be used to remotely access a computer when an end user is not present. For LogMeIn Rescue, administrators can use the Administration Center to allow remote access for certain technicians or technician groups. TeamViewer also supports remote access by allowing the owner of the device to allow unattended access through the TeamViewer desktop application. However, Rescue does allow administrators to implement remote access more efficiently through mass deployment to multiple devices using an MSI installer (i.e., Access Wizard). Administrators can also specify the time range a machine can be accessed, and when the access wizard will expire.

FINAL THOUGHT

Whether considered an aberration or a more permanent fixture, the work from home paradigm accelerated by the global pandemic has altered how organizations administer support to employees (and in cases customers). Both LogMeIn Rescue and TeamViewer provide viable options to address these needs, but individual preference will influence the value weighting placed on uniquely available functionality or how similar capabilities are implemented. For example, LogMeIn Rescue provides more focus on protecting end users from malicious actors (which may impact end-user perceptions) and increased productivity through multiple connection initiation methods and the elimination of pre-meditated software downloads; which may be more applicable to organizations with a larger and varied employee/customer base. Smaller organizations with prescribed IT assets, less likely to hit licensing limits, and service providers with more field technicians might be well suited to the TeamViewer solution.

Selecting the right remote support solution however, will be very individual given diverse and unique business requirements. As each of these vendors pursue different philosophies and implementation strategies for overlapping functionality, each also provides additional unique capabilities that can play a significant role when comparing the individual strengths and weaknesses of the respective solutions. It is not simply a matter of looking at an overall rating average (see below), but rather it requires prospective customers to consider these strategies fully when assessing which solution best fits their individual support cultures.

FEATURES COMPARISON

– LogMeIn Rescue/TeamViewer –

The following provides a brief look at both the LogMeIn Rescue and TeamViewer remote support solutions. While both vendors have dedicated offerings, each can also provide and integrate additional products to further augment their capabilities in other areas.

The following table looks at the superset of functionality provided by each vendor's respective solution, regardless of price. While prospective customers should not to be left wanting from a technical perspective, vendor packaging and licensing practices (and customer budget) may significantly impact whether or not the full functionality is available. For example, one vendor may offer features included with the core product that are otherwise licensed options in another vendor's solution.

No Support ◌ — — — — — — — — — → ● Excellent Support
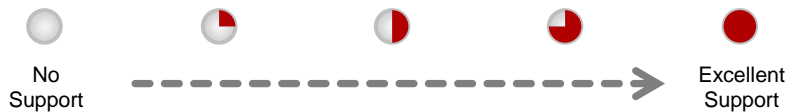
Core Evaluation Factors		
Feature	**LogMeIn Rescue**	**TeamViewer**
Platform Overview		
OS Support	◕	●
Browser Support	◑	◕
Mobile Support	◔	◕
High Availability / Scalability	●	◕
Event Logging	●	◕
Security / Encryption	●	●
Additional Security Features	●	◑
Integrations / Connectors		
CRM Integration	◕	◕
SSO Integration	●	◕

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Core Evaluation Factors		
Feature	**LogMeIn Rescue**	**TeamViewer**
Active Directory Integration	◑	◔
Additional Native Integrations	○	◔
Remote Access API	○	◔
API	●	●
Mobile SDK	●	●
Remote Control / Augmented Reality		
Client UI	●	●
Remote Support Capabilities	●	●
End-User Initiated Connection Methods	◕	◕
Augmented Reality Tools	◕	◕
Ease of Use: Technicians	●	●
Ease of Use: End-User	◕	◑
Multi-Session Limits	●	◑
Collaboration	◕	◕
File Transfer	●	●
Scripts	◕	◕
Administration and Management		
Ease of Installation / Maintenance	●	●
User Management	◕	◕
Billing	○	◕
Reporting	●	◕
Remote Permissions	◑	●
Channels / Service Queues	●	◕

Note: This assessment was commissioned by LogMeIn. Zibis Group does not endorse any vendor solution. This report is provided as a guide to help evaluate products based on several critical areas of consideration when choosing a Remote Support Solution.

ABOUT ZIBIS GROUP

Zibis Group Inc. ("Zibis Group") is a leading source for market research and advisory services on the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry and related sectors. We assist vendors, government institutions, academia, non-profits and other key industry stakeholders by providing them with the tools they need to make informed decisions.

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