



Closing the Gap With **Remote IT Support**

How higher ed can scale remote support to
meet the dramatic increase in demand



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IN THE PAST YEAR, because of COVID-19, higher education has switched from a primarily in-person teaching model to a remote-only or hybrid model of learning. This disruption left many institutions scrambling to maintain short-term continuity.

Faculty had to rapidly transfer their courses to an online environment, and IT departments had the heavy lift of supporting this transfer. This required logistical coordination to ensure that faculty and staff had the software and hardware necessary to teach classes to a mix of in person and virtual students. It also required ensuring students had the devices they needed and that IT could help teachers and students troubleshoot access or connection issues.

While the chaos of the early days of moving everyone to a remote-learning environment has subsided, most higher education institutions continue to offer classes in a remote or hybrid environment. In an Education Dive's studioID and Rescue by LogMeIn survey of 152 higher education IT professionals conducted in November 2020, 58% of respondents said their institution's primary model for instruction was hybrid; an additional 36% said their institution was remote-only.

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More Demand for IT Support

With the switch to hybrid or remote-learning models, IT has been stretched to its limit; asked to provide technical support to a broad user base across a myriad of networks, applications and device types. Of those surveyed, 70% of respondents said their support teams were responsible for supporting administrators, faculty, other staff and students.

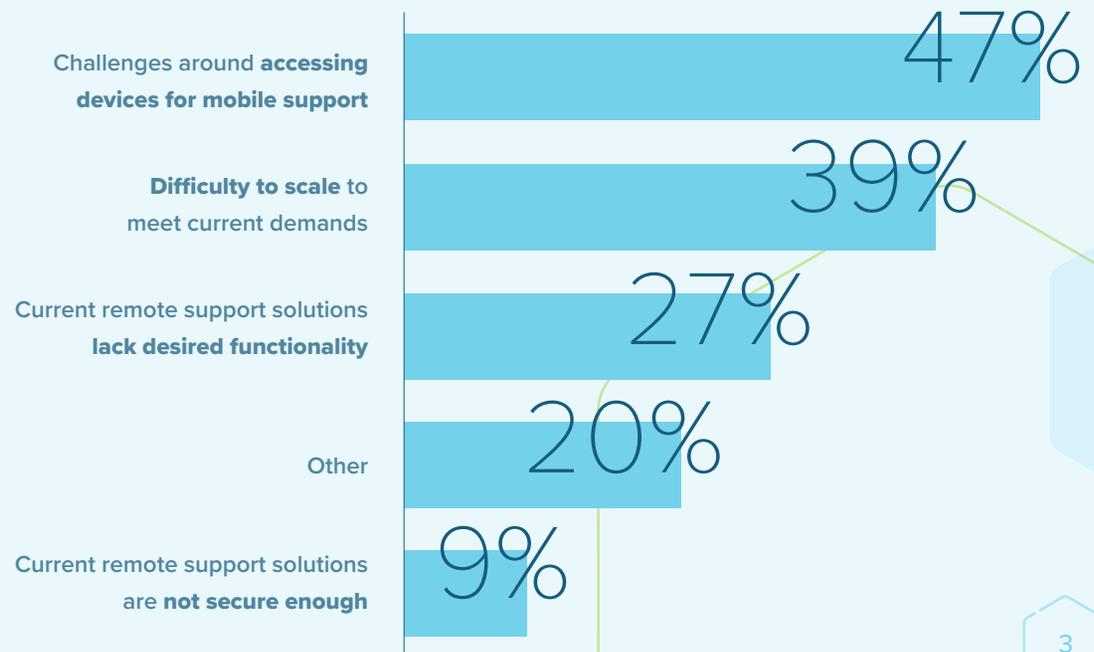
In addition, the move to hybrid environments has dramatically increased the need for IT support. More than one-third (39%) of respondents said

it was difficult to scale to meet current demands and nearly half (47%) said accessing devices for remote support had been challenging.

Because of these challenges, many IT teams have struggled to meet the demand for remote IT support in a fast, secure and responsive manner. While short-term solutions made sense at the start of the pandemic, it's time to take a more long-term and sophisticated approach to managing remote support beyond the pandemic.

Here's a look at how to improve the current state of remote support.

WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES WITH YOUR CURRENT REMOTE SUPPORT SOLUTION?

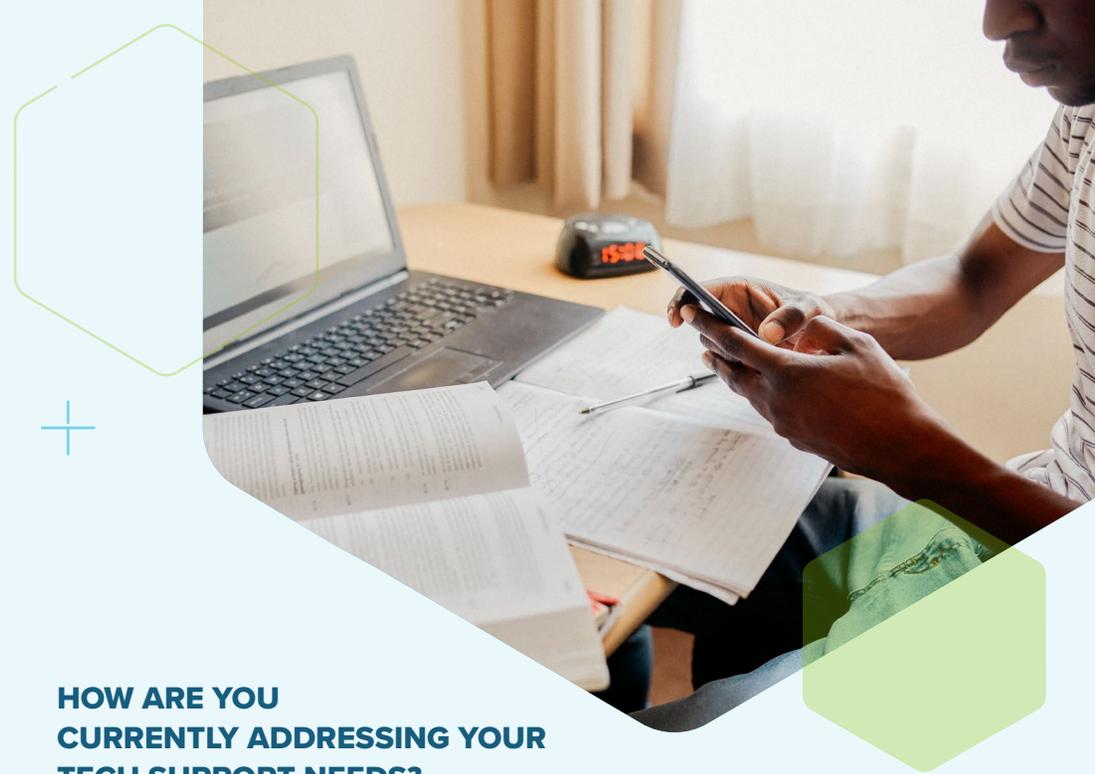


Online Meeting Tools Are Not The Solution

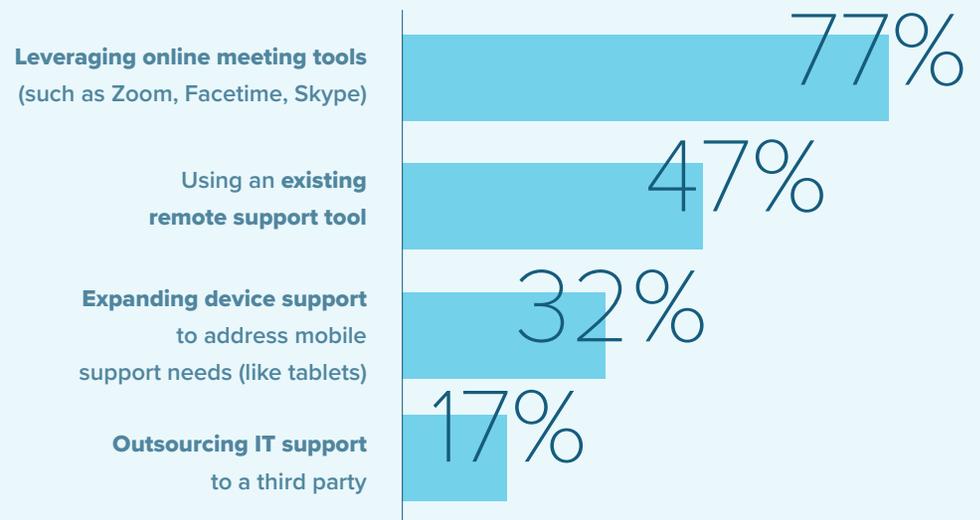
Survey results showed that the majority of IT teams (77%) had turned to online meeting tools such as Zoom, FaceTime and Skype to address their tech-support needs.

While these tools were easy to stand up at the start of the pandemic, when IT didn't have a lot of time to adapt, and they do provide a way to see a user's desktop and guide the user through the necessary steps to fix an issue, they also have many drawbacks.

Using online meeting tools often makes providing support more difficult and time-consuming for the technician. Data must be pulled manually, which takes more time and limits a technician's ability to help more users in less time.

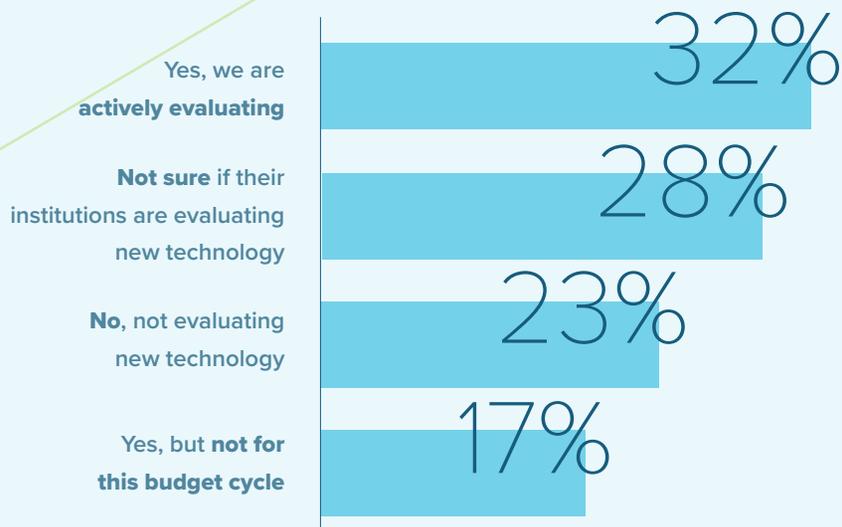


HOW ARE YOU CURRENTLY ADDRESSING YOUR TECH SUPPORT NEEDS?





ARE YOU EVALUATING NEW TECHNOLOGY TO HELP?



Further, accessing and supporting different types of devices for remote support also becomes more challenging. Meeting tools typically aren't designed for someone to share their full screen on a mobile device. And even those meeting tools that do offer this capability still have limitations when it comes to seeing what applications are installed or pushing certain applications to different people or transferring files. Technical-support staff also can't go in unattended, which means the end user must be available for the entire session, even if the agent doesn't require active help on their part.

Finally, these products don't provide adequate security. "From the security side, it comes down to transparency. There is basically zero audit trail, especially if you're using a free version of Skype or Zoom," said Chris Savio, product marketing manager at Rescue. "If an end user claims that you breached personal information from them or installed something on their computer that was malware, there's no way to trace back to that."

Not surprisingly, 49% of respondents said they were evaluating new technology to help with support services.



The Advantages of a Remote Support Tool

Having a purpose-built remote support tool can make providing IT support much easier, more scalable and more secure. Here are five ways the investment in a remote IT support tool can pay off.

1. REDUCE HEADACHES FOR YOUR IT DEPARTMENT

While there is a perception that online meeting tools, such as Zoom or Skype, might be easier to use since consumers are familiar with them, this isn't actually the case. Starting a remote support session is as easy or easier than starting a Zoom, for instance. All the end user has to do is click a link or put in a code and accept the download.

But the real benefit to the end user is that they don't have to be present and actively participating in support sessions. "A purpose-built remote support tool gives you a wider range of functionality to pull information without actually having to touch that person's computer. And frankly, it just makes it easier on the end user," Savio said. "The end user can continue doing whatever they need to be doing while the support person is triaging stuff in the background. The support person can uninstall things, push things and transfer files, all without needing to even bother or break the productivity of that end user."

Another benefit of a remote support tool is that it can provide unattended access. This feature gives the support agent the ability to access the device at a more convenient time for the end user, especially if fixing the issue will take some time. A meeting tool, however, requires the end user to be present to start the session.

2. IDENTIFY ISSUES FAST

Another time-saving benefit of a remote support tool is the ability to retrieve specific configuration and diagnostic information about the customer's computer remotely. With remote diagnostics, technicians can get a quick summary of processes, services and applications to rapidly identify the issue without having to tediously dig around manually in the end user's device as they would have to with a meeting tool.

"The ability to do a lot of things in the background helps you to streamline processes," Savio said. "You can do things a lot more quickly. So the amount of time you're spending to solve an issue will go way down."

"The ability to do a lot of things in the background helps you to streamline processes."

CHRIS SAVIO

Product marketing manager at Rescue

Southern New Hampshire Sees Significant Improvement in Support Resolution Time

By using Rescue for its remote support services, which include general help desk assistance for website users and a deeper level of support for more intricate issues, Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) has significantly improved its IT support to faculty and students. Connection to technical support is frictionless, leading customers to solutions faster — even during the busiest times.

In fact, since deploying Rescue, SNHU has decreased its average speed to answer from 1.5 minutes to just 25 to 40 seconds, and it has maintained the ability to handle peak volume events with only 10 to 15 seconds difference in pickup time.

On the agent side, contextual information offers insight into what issues to expect before the session starts, saving both time and effort. Agents can seamlessly take control of the user's device, send files and documents, and even fix hardware issues through Rescue Lens video support. While the agent solves the issue, the user can sit back and do other things.



“Like with any other service, you want something smooth, easy to use and less of an uplift for the end user.”

MICHAEL O'LEARY

Manager of client services at SNHU

3. REMOTE SUPPORT ANY DEVICE

Another significant challenge in delivering remote IT support is the “bring your own device” (BYOD) environment that universities and colleges must support. BYOD means that end users may have any number of operating systems or devices. The ability to support mobile devices has become particularly important. According to research by Wiley, 56% of online college students used a smartphone or tablet to complete at least some of their online course-related activities.¹

From desktop to mobile or Mac to Windows, a purpose-built remote support tool provides several features that make supporting any device easy and simple for both the agent and the end user. For instance, agents can quickly identify and address issues from a central dashboard without the need to navigate the end user’s device. They can address alerts, manage connections, push settings and more with one click. They can also have a live view of the end user’s remote iOS or Android screen to see exactly what the end user sees. And, key device diagnostics can help pinpoint the problem faster.

Device configuration on any device or operating system is also supported. This saves time by allowing agents to quickly push configurations such as passcode requirements and email, network and Wi-Fi settings.

4. SCALE SUPPORT WITHOUT INCREASING HEADCOUNT

A purpose-built remote support tool allows IT to optimize resources by remotely supporting more users simultaneously. Agents can toggle between up to 10 sessions at once, which can save a significant amount of time while multiple support processes run.



“Because you can support multiple sessions at one time, you can be running multiple sessions across multiple devices,” Savio said. “So you’re able to multitask effectively if there are problems that you need to address with multiple end users at once.”

Instant chat is another feature of most remote support tools that further enables multisession handling. Agents can chat pre-session to qualify the level of support needed, which helps both to speed response times and ensure that customers are quickly directed to the agent who can provide the appropriate level of support needed.

5. ENSURE SECURE REMOTE SESSIONS

While security is always a primary concern, it becomes even more important when users work on an unmanaged network, which is now commonly the case with the majority of students and faculty learning and working remotely. To improve security, support sessions should be protected with end-to-end 256-bit AES encryption, and all support sessions should be recorded and stored in a database in encrypted format that can be queried later. Finally, it’s also important to obtain end-user permission before the technician performs support, which is easy to request and track in a purpose-built remote support solution.

While meeting tools can record sessions and provide some encryption of the data, they do not provide a complete audit trail and do not track and store end-user permissions for access to their device. Additionally, in a purpose-built tool, support agents can be given varying roles and responsibilities, ensuring that only the most trusted and experienced agents are allowed unattended access.





Rescue by LogMeIn Gives Fordham University Security Assurance

Fordham University provides IT support for more than 4,000 faculty and staff members. Its employees are extremely protective of their privacy because of the confidential nature of the intellectual property. As a result, the IT department did not have rights over employee computers.

Additionally, the distributed nature of these systems meant that ad hoc on-site support was inefficient and unfeasible. A remote solution was necessary, but users resisted an agent-based remote solution that granted IT staff unlimited, anytime access to their computers.

To balance the university's needs for remote IT support and user privacy, Fordham University turned to Rescue. Rescue provides on-demand, permission-based remote support that automatically eliminates access rights and software from the remote machine after each session. By deploying Rescue, Fordham's IT department drastically cut down on response times without raising privacy concerns among the school's educators.

Deliver Better Remote Support Now — And In The Future

The pandemic will subside eventually, and higher education institutions will return to a primary model of in-person learning. But things won't ever return to the old normal. Both faculty and students have now spent a better part of a year in hybrid and remote-learning environments. Their adoption of this format will likely create an enduring transformation of how higher education is delivered which will have a profound impact on how IT offers support.

For instance, primarily lecture-based courses with little personalization or human interaction can continue to be delivered remotely or in a hybrid format, lowering costs and giving students and faculty more flexibility.

“By freeing resources from courses that can be commoditized, colleges would have more resources to commit to research-based teaching, personalized problem solving, and mentorship. The students would also have more resources at their disposal, too, because they ... would take commoditized courses online at their convenience and at much cheaper cost,” argued Vijay Govindarajan and Anup Srivastava in a recent Harvard Business Review article.²

What this means for higher education IT remote support is that even when a return to normal is possible, the need to offer support to remote and hybrid learners, faculty and staff will still exist. Therefore, higher education institutions should look at remote IT support as a long-term investment with the right tools in place to ensure fast, scalable and secure support.





Sources

1. [“The Use of Mobile Devices in Online Classrooms,”](#) Wiley, 2019.
2. Vijay Govindarajan and Anup Srivastava. [“What the Shift to Virtual Learning Could Mean for the Future of Higher Ed,”](#) Harvard Business Review, March 31, 2020.





+ Rescue

by LogMeIn[®]

Rescue is a powerful, easy-to-use remote support solution for PCs, Macs, mobile devices and more. Rescue is built to serve teams of all sizes, from small help desks to the world's largest support organizations, and everyone in between. Rescue helps you provide technical support to your employees, your customers or both, with a solution that is fast, reliable, flexible and easy to use.

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