



Ensuring Productivity and Security in the New Remote Work Era

A recent IDG survey indicates there's room for improvement when it comes to the scalability and security of remote work tools.

As much of the workforce has gone remote over the past year, companies have scrambled to ensure business continuity and maintain worker productivity. Remote work tools have become essential to meeting businesses' goals and keeping organizations solvent during the pandemic.

Yet, at the same time, companies relying on remote work solutions are growing increasingly concerned about security and scalability—causing many to now reevaluate the tools they adopted early on. Companies are making new investments in remote work tools to protect their data, and to keep both worker productivity and user satisfaction high.

A recent IDG survey of both IT and line of business (LOB) leaders indicates that significant security concerns exist, and there's room for improvement when it comes to cybersecurity and effective remote support tools.

Welcome to the Work-From-Anywhere Era

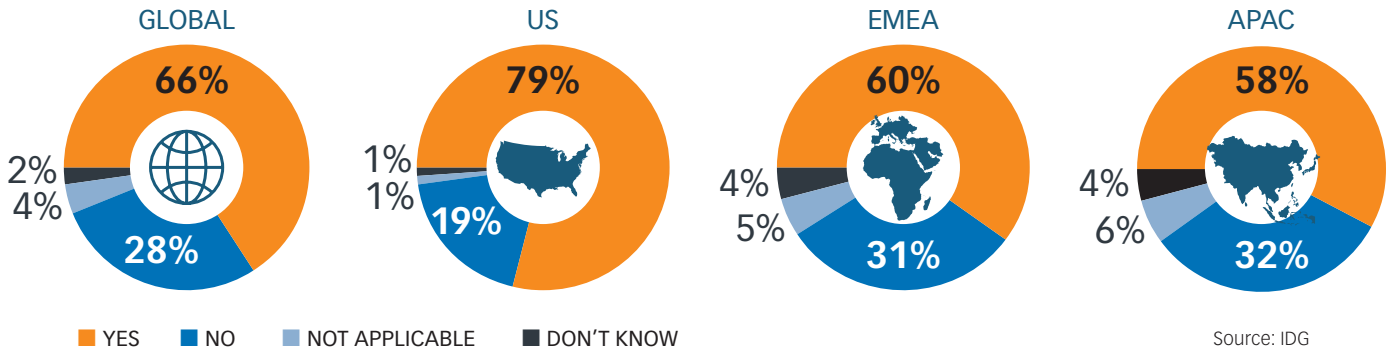
In today's world, more and more employees are working remotely.

For most, working remotely has a fair share of benefits, including eliminating long commute times for some employees, giving them more time to spend with their immediate family. But workers are also operating from their homes using their home Wi-Fi, which presents security risks as cyberthieves look to take advantage.

It's become clear that remote work is less secure: 79% of US respondents note that it has exposed them to cyber risk (see figure 1).

FIGURE 1.

Remote Work Expands Cyber Risk



IT and line of business (LOB) leaders indicate that significant security concerns exist, and there's room for improvement when it comes to cybersecurity and effective remote support tools.

US respondents also cite security-related issues among their most pressing current challenges as they plan ahead for 2021. Top concerns for those surveyed include:

- Providing secure access to applications (28%)
- Securing home and mobile networks (34%)
- Network connectivity (39%)
- Cybersecurity management (40%)
- Providing secure access to data (47%)

What's more, these security-related issues are expected to extend into 2021 as remote work continues. For US companies:

- 34% of workers will be remote at least some of the time in 2021
- 32% of workers are expected to use vulnerable devices
- 34% of workers will be reliant on home Wi-Fi

For some companies, the pandemic may have even created a permanent shift toward remote work, making a well-thought-out plan for long-term, and more secure and efficient remote work tools all the more important.

Substantial Room for Improvement with Off-the-Shelf Solutions

Most respondents have amassed a variety of remote work tools over the years, while other companies quickly implemented a host of new tools last spring as the pandemic intensified. Respondents say remote work tools have been beneficial for both employees and customers in several ways:

- Connect and collaborate from anywhere
- Engage with customers who are located across the globe
- Support employees and customers worldwide
- Secure an "anywhere workforce"

Now, companies have started taking a step back to evaluate and reassess the remote work tools they originally deployed and to figure out if they need a more sustainable path forward.

While survey respondents agree that remote tools generally do work well, they believe there's substantial room for improvement. In the US, 43% of survey respondents note that the remote work tools and solutions their organization adopted over the years performed adequately, poorly, or very poorly in the immediate aftermath of the lockdown.

Globally, enterprises feel that they're falling short in infrastructure, IT, and data security: 44% of respondents cite complexity in IT security infrastructure as a vulnerability, and 40% plan on upgrading IT and data security to boost corporate resiliency.

Security and Ease of Use Drive Consolidation Efforts

One possible solution: consolidate current remote work solutions and settle on tools that best enhance security and worker productivity for the long-term.

There is widespread consensus that remote work tools in general do enhance worker productivity. However, companies have not been satisfied with the off-the-shelf solutions they initially scrambled to adopt. Nor are they entirely happy with the number of often disjointed remote work tools they are currently using.

Now, 90% of US companies say they're actively consolidating, planning to consolidate, or have already consolidated their remote work tools for 2021. Many factors are driving this consolidation. The most notable include:

- Ease of administration (52%)
- User experience (49%)
- Simplifying support (47%)
- Scalability (45%)

Marie Ruzzo, product marketing director at LogMeIn, says that as companies start to evaluate their remote work tools and make necessary changes for the coming year, it's important to consider how the tools they select will impact their employees and help desk staff.

"Leaders will need to place greater emphasis on tools that minimize disruptions in employees' day-to-day work in order to maintain productivity and ensure that employees feel supported," she says. IT leaders will place great importance on utilizing simple, easy-to-use solutions that provide a high level of security and are easy to maintain.

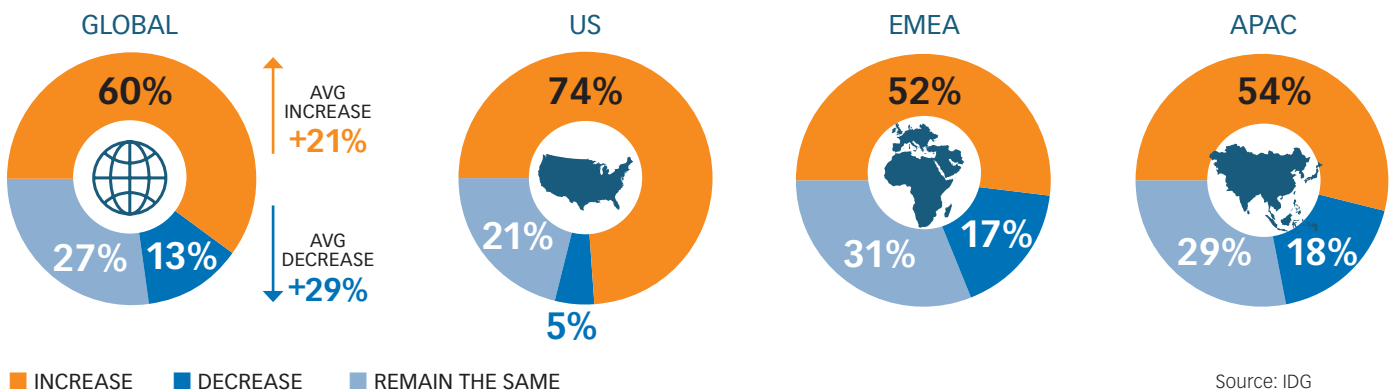
US businesses also say they plan to commit dollars to both improving and consolidating remote work tools in the new year. Over the next 12 months, 74% of US organizations plan to increase their investment in remote work tools (see figure 2).

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MARIE RUZZO
PRODUCT MARKETING DIRECTOR, LOGMEIN

FIGURE 2.

Growing Investment in Remote Work Tools



Source: IDG

How to Get Started

As business leaders begin deciding where to focus when improving remote work, prioritizing across the various remote work categories is crucial, says Ruzzo. She recommends that business leaders consider taking the following steps:

1. **Focus on ease of use.** This will reduce IT complexity and headaches for your remote help desk.
2. **Simplify IT administration.** Consolidate remote access, support, and endpoint management so it's easier to maintain.
3. **Scale to fit your business.** This ensures you can deliver fast, reliable support no matter what size your business—or how fast you're growing.
4. **Prioritize remote work tools.** Tools such as ad-hoc remote support will mitigate employee downtime.
5. **Standardize remote work tools.** Focus on solutions that help close security gaps and simplify the support experience, providing both ease of administration and a great agent/technician experience.
6. **Secure endpoints.** Proactively push patches, monitor performance, and automate routine IT maintenance.

The Expanding Role of Remote Work Tools

In response to the pandemic, companies increased the use of existing remote work tools or quickly found and deployed various off-the-shelf solutions.

Fast-forward to today, and what's emerging is not a remote work experiment but a dramatic acceleration of a movement that was already well underway—the next big phase of a workplace revolution.

Forward-looking companies are handling this in several ways: working to get ahead of any security issues now by reassessing their remote work tools and processes; consolidating solutions wherever possible; and investing in best-in-class technology.

Remote work tools are no longer limited to a small subset of employees; they span the whole workforce. These tools also go beyond traditional web conferencing to cloud telephony, cloud support, remote access, and support tools that secure your home and office. When it comes to attributes of remote access and support applications, IT buyers must prioritize solutions that are secure, simple, and easy for support technicians to use.

Forward-looking companies are handling this in several ways: working to get ahead of any security issues now by reassessing their remote work tools and processes; consolidating solutions wherever possible; and investing in best-in-class technology. They're also focused on ease of use, simplifying IT administration, and scaling to fit the business. Companies that take the time to follow this plan will be much better positioned to lead in the future of remote work.

For more information about Rescue by LogMeIn, please visit: www.logmeinrescue.com

About the survey

IDG polled nearly 600 executives from across the US, EMEA, and APAC, ranging from IT manager to CIO and CTO, and including nearly 200 respondents from the US.

IDG Communications, Inc.