



Technology Use in IT Support: Survey Says... *by Jenny Rains and Rick Joslin*

Over the last several years, HDI has collected information about technology use in the IT service and technical support help desk/support center. This year, for the first time, HDI has collected similar information for the desktop support industry. In this article, we will present the results from the technology sections of the *2010 HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Report* (the 2011 survey is currently collecting data) alongside the results from the groundbreaking *2011 HDI Desktop Support Practices & Salary Report*.

In addition to the two annual surveys, and in an effort to provide our community with a complete listing of desktop support technology vendors, HDI collaborated with the HDI Desktop Support Advisory Board (DSAB) to identify the eleven categories of technologies that are critical to the success of desktop support. With input from members of the DSAB, the HDI Desktop Support Leadership Council, and the Desktop Support Forum, we pulled together a list of vendors and products for each category. That list, provided at the end of this article, includes products currently being used by one or more members. In future research efforts, HDI will survey the larger community to establish the adoption level for

each product and expand the list of vendors that serve the desktop support community.

Support Tool Use and Implementation

In the dynamic world of IT support, new technologies are continually being introduced and old ones improved upon. It is no big surprise, then, that incident management systems are the most utilized technology by both support centers (88%) and desktop support (91%), and that they account for the lion's share of budget allocations in both areas. In 2010, 30 percent of support centers reported that they were planning to add, replace, or upgrade their incident management systems; in 2011, 26 percent of desktop support teams reported having the same plans for the upcoming year. About 14 percent of support centers reported that incident management systems were the primary initiative for tool implementation.

The support center survey results revealed that the popularity of *configuration management tools*, *e-mail management tools*, and *online chat* increased in 2010. The number of support centers using chat went up from 26 percent in 2009 to 30 percent in 2010; in particular, the government and financial services industry enthusiastically embraced chat tools, with 11 percent and 9 percent increases, respectively, from 2009 to 2010. E-mail management tool use went up 5 percent, to 56 percent, and configuration

Support Tool Use and Implementation (2010)

	Automated Call Distributor	Customer Satisfaction Tool	Incident Management Software	Knowledge Management Software	Online Chat	Remote Monitoring/Support Tools	Self-help Tools	Asset Management Tool	Configuration Management Tool	E-mail Management Tool
We use this and have no plans to replace/update	50%	51%	60%	43%	25%	68%	30%	36%	36%	45%
We use this, but are planning to replace/update	13%	16%	28%	21%	5%	15%	15%	21%	12%	11%
We do not use this, but are planning to add it	4%	13%	2%	19%	18%	6%	27%	14%	16%	10%
We do not use this	31%	18%	7%	14%	50%	9%	24%	23%	29%	28%
I don't know	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	6%	7%	6%
Percent of support centers	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

management tools are being used by 48 percent of support centers, which is 8 percent higher than in 2009. The biggest adopters of e-mail management tools in 2010 were internal support centers and large support centers (over 10,000 customers). Also of note: Retail and outsourced services providers have more support centers using configuration management tools than any other industries.

For the last several years, survey results have revealed that *incident management tools* and *customer satisfaction tools* are the ones most support centers consider “must-haves.” *Knowledge management software* and *remote monitoring/support tools* continually compete for that third-place spot.

Social Media

The use of social media applications in the support center will be one of the most interesting topics to trend over the next few years. Since 2009, Facebook has seen a 5 percent increase (from 3% to 8%) in support centers using it to provide support. Twitter is up 2 percent (from 4% to 6%) and SharePoint use is down slightly from 30 percent in 2009 to 27 percent in 2010. The 2011 survey results are highly anticipated.

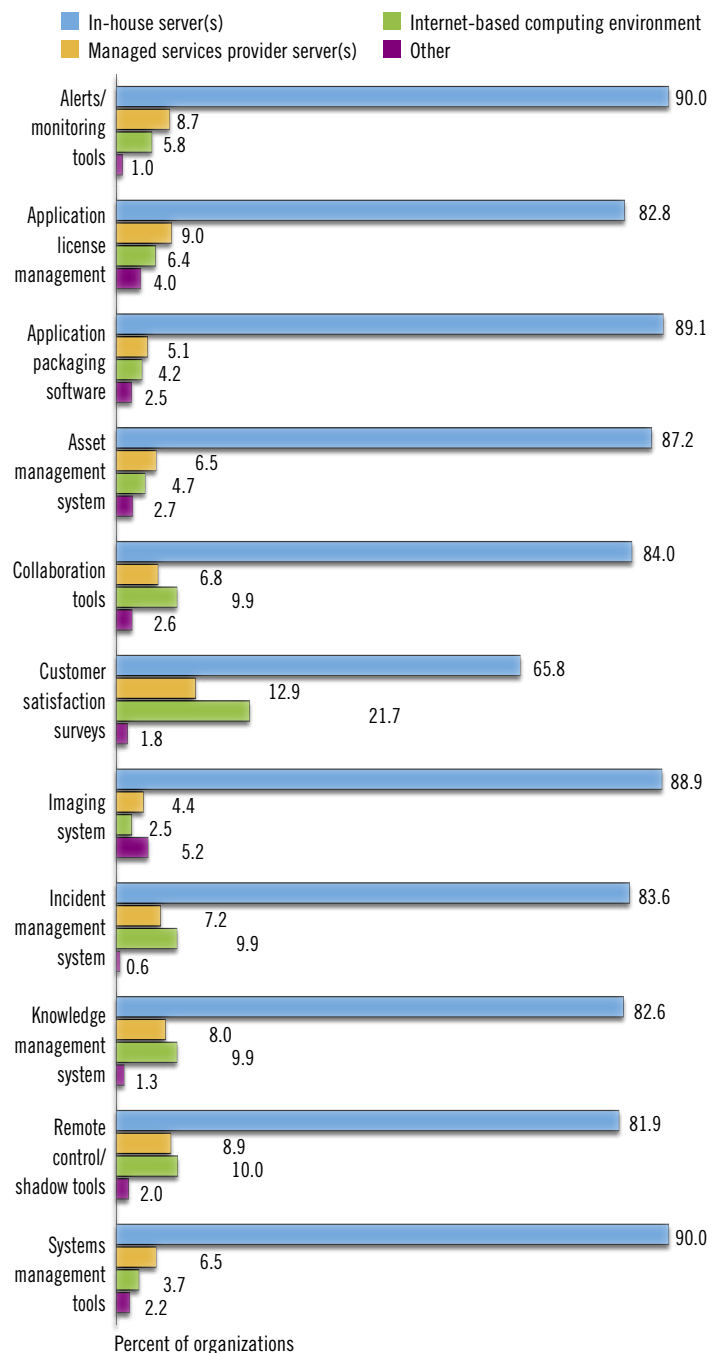
Implementing, Upgrading, and Hosting

When it comes to implementing new technologies or upgrading existing ones, many factors affect the final decision. The desktop support survey results revealed that the most important factor is *continual process improvement* (58%), followed by *improving customer experience* (54%). The desktop support survey also asked about how these technologies are being hosted. Most desktop support organizations are running their technologies on *in-house servers*, as opposed to *managed services provider servers* or *Internet-based computing environments*, the latter being used by very few organizations in 2011. More organizations run *customer satisfaction surveying tools* in Internet-based computing environments than any other technology, yet this group accounts for only about 21 percent of the organizations that use them.

Hosting will be an interesting trend to follow in the future, along with SaaS use. In 2011, about 36 percent of organizations are using SaaS, with 24 percent planning to increase their use. Only one percent of desktop support organizations plan to decrease their current use of SaaS.

From where are organizations running each of the following technologies?

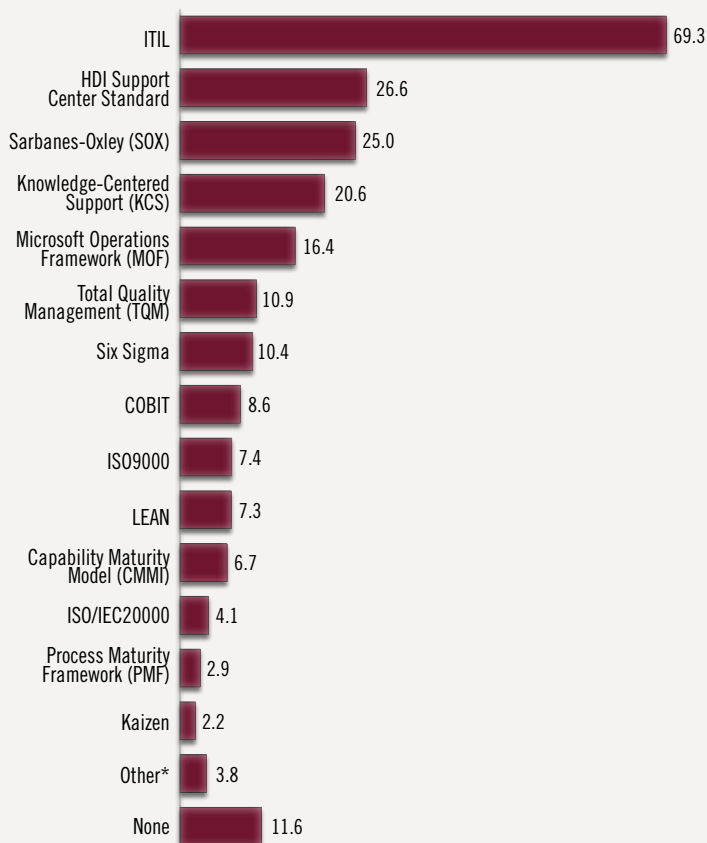
(Only includes those using each technology.)



Remote Support

Remote support technology discussions are currently dominating the IT service and technical support industry, and with good reason: Ninety-four percent of IT support organizations provide remote support. Moreover, most organizations have desktop support staff that are located in more than one location, whether they are in remote offices or home offices. Over 45 percent of home-based technicians do not dispatch to a device's physical location. Thus, 81 percent of organizations agree that remote control/shadow tools are one of the "must-have" desktop support technologies.

When selecting technologies for desktop support, with what are organizations aligning?



*Most of the "Other" responses are industry-specific requirements (e.g., HIPAA).

Both support centers and desktop support teams utilize remote support technologies. For organizations that offer remote desktop support, 46 percent report using it for more than half of the support they provide, but only 21 percent actually have formal methods in place for measuring the percent of tickets resolved remotely. And while SCCM (25%), VNC (20%), and Dameware (18%) are the most-used tools for remote support, the list of remote support tools that are currently in use is extremely diverse.

Framework Alignment

More organizations are aligning their technology purchases with ITIL than any other option; ITIL alignment is important for 53 percent of support centers, and a necessity for an additional 31 percent. In 2010, alignment was most important for the government and financial services industry, but was not as important for small support centers (less than 2,000 customers) or those that provided purely external support. The desktop support survey revealed that, in 2011, 69 percent of desktop support organizations seeking ITIL alignment when selecting technologies.

Desktop Support Technology Survey Results

As mentioned previously, HDI conducted a small-sample study of the HDI Desktop Support Advisory Board, the HDI Desktop Support Leadership Council, and the Desktop Support Forum to begin identifying the vendors and products currently in use in desktop support organizations. The results of this survey will ultimately be used to develop a larger study that will provide a comprehensive guide to vendors that serve the desktop support community. The list below outlines the eleven technology categories that were identified in the small-sample survey as critical for successful desktop support, along with the products currently being used by one or more of the survey respondents.

1. Alerts and Monitoring: CA Spectrum Infrastructure Manager (CA Technologies); Gomez (Compuware); HEAT (FrontRange); HelpSTAR (Help Desk Technologies Int'l Corp.); IBM Tivoli (IBM); WhatsUp Gold (Ipswitch); LANDesk Management (LANDesk); MSP Center Plus (ManageEngine); McAfee ePolicy Orchestrator (McAfee); Support Center Operations Manager, SharePoint (Microsoft); Nagios Enterprise Management (Nagios); Oasis; e2Campus (Omnilert); ActiveMetrics (PureShare); Orion Network Performance Monitoring (SolarWinds); Altiris, Symantec Endpoint (Symantec); Alarmpoint (Techpoint13).

2. Software Licensing: Remedy (BMC); CA IT Asset Manager (CA Technologies); Centennial (FrontRange); HelpSTAR (Help Desk Technologies Int'l Corp.); IBM Maximo (IBM); LANDesk Management (LANDesk); Support Center Operations Manager (Microsoft); KeyServer (Sassafras); Altiris (Symantec).

3. Application Packaging: CA Client Automation (CA Technologies); Admin Studio (Flexera); IBM Tivoli Endpoint Manager (IBM); LANDesk Management (LANDesk); Support Center Operations Manager, APPv (Microsoft); Zenworks (Novell); Altiris, Wise Package Studio (Symantec).

4. Asset Management: Remedy (BMC); CA Client Automation (CA Technologies); Centennial, HEAT (FrontRange); HelpSTAR (Help Desk Technologies Int'l Corp.); Asset Center (HP); IBM Maximo, IBM Tivoli Endpoint Manager (IBM); ServiceDesk Plus (ManageEngine); Support Center Operations Manager (Microsoft);

Service Management Portal (Netfor); Zenworks (Novell); JD Edwards EnterpriseOne Capital Asset Management (Oracle); Service-now.com; Altiris (Symantec).

5. Collaboration: Webex (Cisco); Google Apps (Google); Lotus Sametime (IBM); Exchange, Office Communicator Server, Office Live, SharePoint, Windows Live Messenger (Microsoft); Zimbra (VMWare).

6. Customer Satisfaction Surveys: Remedy (BMC); CA Service Desk Manager (CA Technologies); cVent Web Surveys (cVent); HEAT (FrontRange); Customer Satisfaction Index Service (HDI); SupportWorks (Hornbill); Kinetic Survey (Kinetic Data); SharePoint (Microsoft); Service Management Portal (Netfor); FootPrints (Numara); Qualtrics; Service-now.com; SnapSurveys; Survey Monkey; Vovici; Zoomerang.

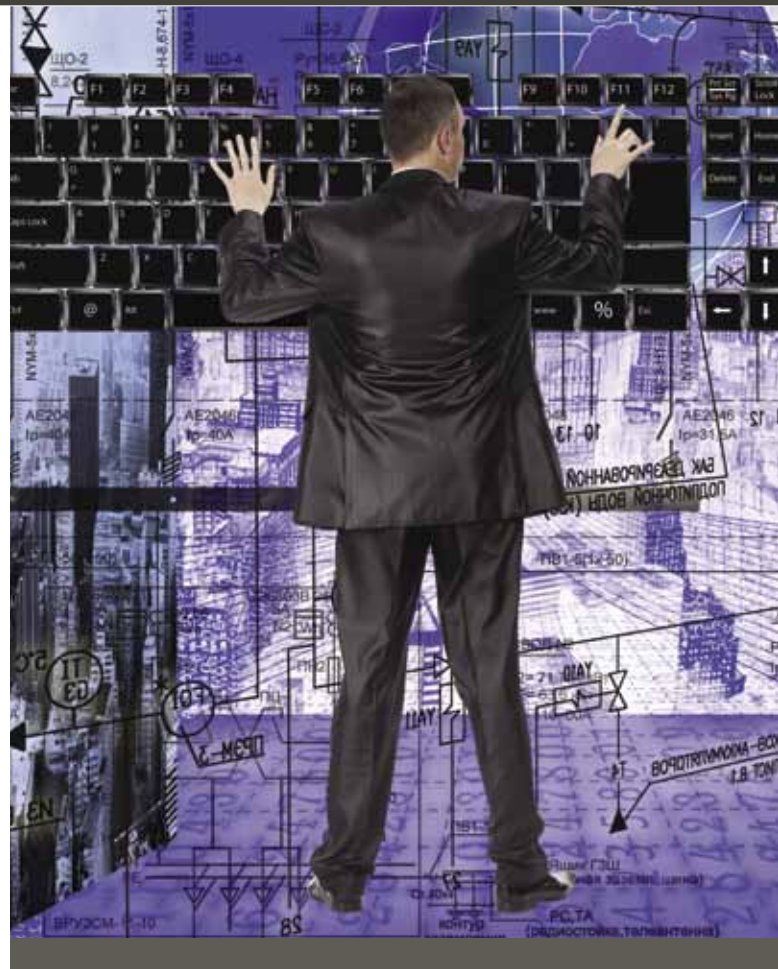
7. Imaging: Kace (Dell); IBM Tivoli Endpoint Manager (IBM); Swimage (Intrinsic); LANDesk Management (LANDesk); Support Center Configuration Manager, Microsoft Deployment Toolkit, Windows System Image Manager (Microsoft); Altiris, Ghost Solution Suite (Symantec)

8. Incident Management: Remedy (BMC); Service Desk Manager, Unicenter (CA Technologies); Cherwell Service Management (Cherwell); Consona CRM (Consona); HEAT (FrontRange); HelpSTAR (Help Desk Technologies Int'l Corp.); SupportWorks (Hornbill); Service Center, Service Manager (HP); WorkCenter (iET Solutions); MSP Center Plus (ManageEngine); Service Management Portal (Netfor); FootPrints (Numara); Parature; ITDirect (SchoolDude); Service-now.com.

9. Knowledge Management: Remedy (BMC); Service Desk Manager, Unicenter (CA Technologies); Consona KM (Consona); HelpSTAR (Help Desk Technologies Int'l Corp.); Enterprise Content Management (IBM); Inquire; Universal Knowledge Suite (Knowledge-Powered Solutions); MSP Center Plus (ManageEngine); SharePoint (Microsoft); Service Management Portal (Netfor); ActiveAgent (Next IT); FootPrints (Numara); Parature; RightAnswers.com; Service-now.com; Service Manager 9 (VMWare).

10. Remote Control/Shadow: B200/B300/B400 (Bomgar); CA SupportBridge (CA Technologies); Webex (Cisco); GoToAssist (Citrix); Mini Remote Control (Dameware); IBM Tivoli Remote Control (IBM); LANDesk Management (LANDesk); Remote Desktop Connection (Microsoft); Real VNC; pcAnywhere (Symantec).

11. Systems Management: CA eHealth SystemEDGE (CA Technologies); IBM Tivoli Endpoint Manager (IBM); System Center Configuration Manager (Microsoft); Zenworks (Novell); Altiris, Ghost Solution Suite (Symantec).



To learn more about how to receive the full industry reports (the *HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Reports* and the *HDI Desktop Support Practices & Salary Report*), visit www.ThinkHDI.com/IndustryReports.

To learn more about HDI's desktop support community and any of the member groups mentioned in this article, visit www.ThinkHDI.com/Desktop.



About the Authors

Jenny Rains has worked with HDI in a research/analysis capacity since 2003. Before coming to HDI, Jenny was the research/data analyst for one of the largest school districts in Colorado. Her areas of expertise include survey development, research design, data analysis, program evaluation, and project management.



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