



TWO SIDES OF THE WFH COIN

IT Team and End-Users Perspectives and Challenges of Work from Home

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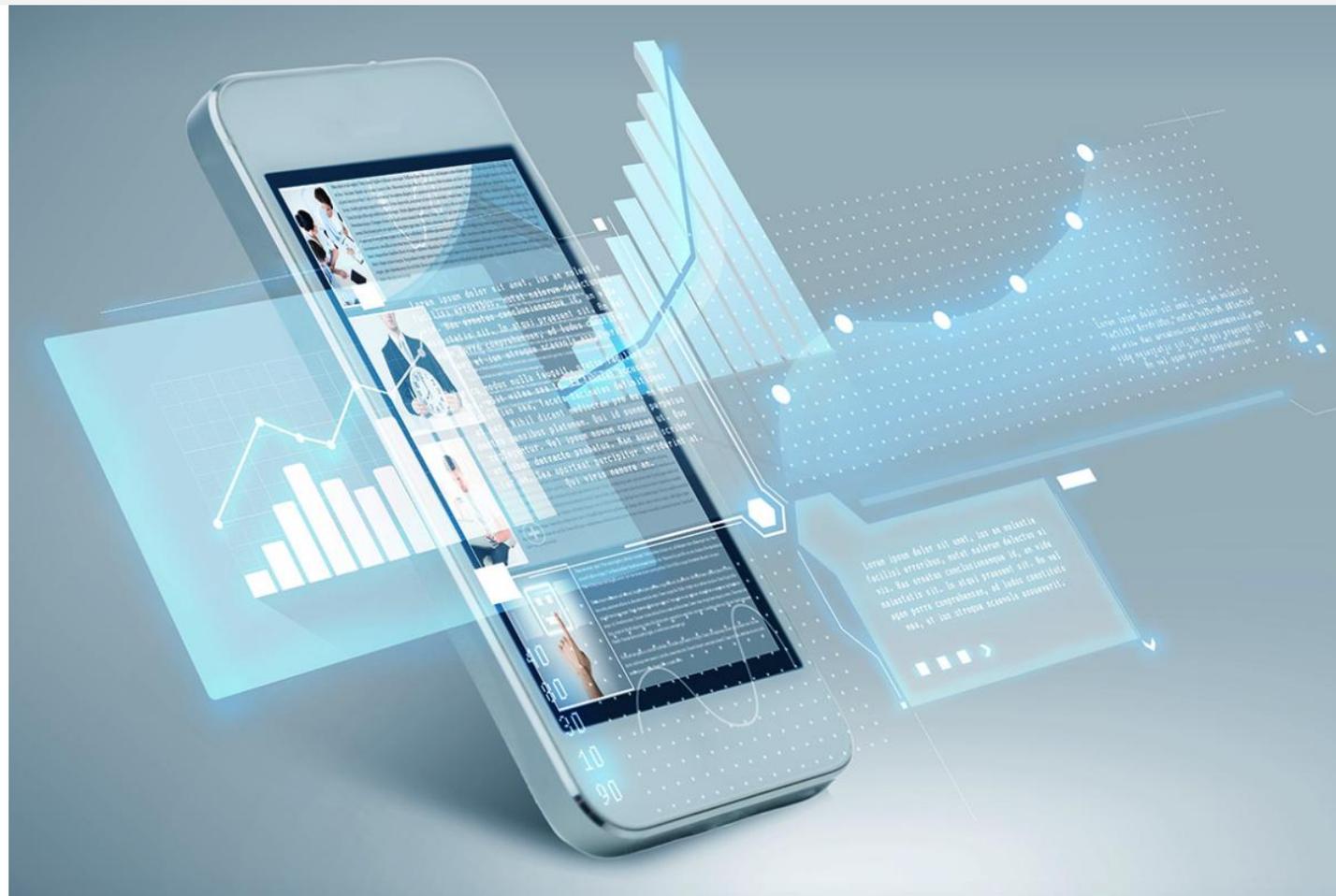
We interviewed:

n = 15 **ITDM** (technology decision makers in large organisations and SMBs)

n = 15 employees working from home,

n = 5 industry experts in the SEA region who focus on technologies that enable remote working capabilities.

This was an in-depth discussion to understand the challenges people face while working remotely (WFH), their evolving needs, frustrations and how the technology leaders are tackling it...



IT Directors and Tech Leads are tackling four key challenges...



Access & Security

It was a race against time to ensure all employees needing access to networks and applications got it before the deadline. This included shipping devices, secure VPN connections when required, access control and authentication to be deployed in time on each of these devices.



User Experience

User experience across devices, applications and locations varies widely. Many employees are accessing applications remotely for the first time, while some are accessing it via a different app/front end. Learning curve varies from few days to a few weeks in some instances.



Budget Realignment

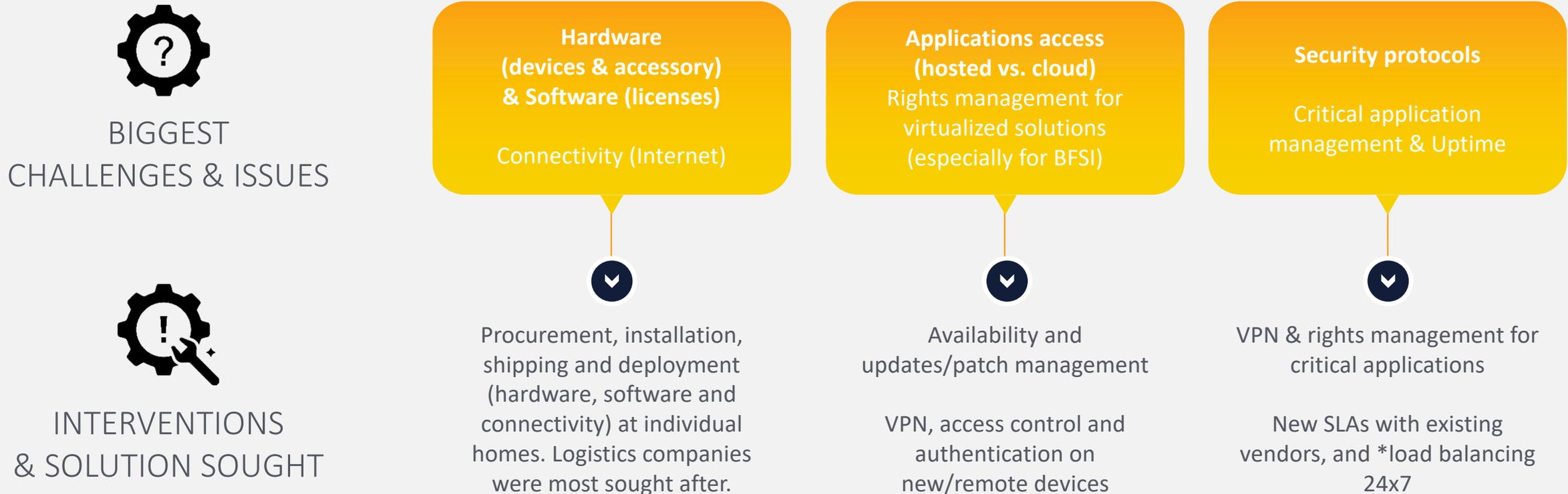
A sudden unplanned need for remote access has meant a chunk of this year's IT budget has to be rerouted to hardware, software and support functions. Some of the strategic IT initiatives had to be put on hold, while a few others (that are time sensitive) are completely shunted.



Tech Support

Standard tech support has become redundant. Many organisations that had a centralised onsite support had to push a majority of the resources online (live environment). A new set of SLAs had to be reworked, remote support functions that could not be scaled up are being outsourced.

How are you tackling access & security issues?



How are you tackling user experience issues?



BIGGEST CHALLENGES & ISSUES



INTERVENTIONS & SOLUTION SOUGHT

New look & feel, completely different experience versus their regular default option



Created tag team/buddies to help each other (especially true for larger organisations), designated experts, created a live log for issues faced for anyone using the same app to access

First time users for certain apps, many lack standard learning curve, direct exposure (testing waters)



Created dummy apps/trials for people to try out first, created demo videos
FAQ document to help guide through the whole journey from logging in to using the app/software

Network/connectivity issues and user experience issues hard to decipher immediately



User manuals re-done with commonly faced network/connectivity issues and how to tackle them
Simple things like inability to reach DNS server via Wi-Fi router can be a big issue

How are you tackling budget realignments?



BIGGEST CHALLENGES & ISSUES



Additional budget needed for procurement of hardware, software licenses, accessories, logistics etc. that was not planned.

Time critical and planned IT initiatives put on back burner or completely put away, some of the skillsets had to be reallocated

Imbalance in IT budget versus what was needed, driven by the sudden knee jerk reaction despite some BCP plans in place

INTERVENTIONS & SOLUTION SOUGHT



Additional sanctions sought from regional or corporate management

Reallocation of budget by putting non-critical purchases behind schedule

Redoing timeline for all deployments, updates and IT infrastructure projects

Human resource reallocation needs HR approval and intervention

BCP budgets are a go-to option for most organisations

Hardware and software in reserve utilised fully, some upgrades expedited. For example upgrading to laptop instead of desktops.

How are you tackling tech support challenges?



BIGGEST CHALLENGES & ISSUES



Change in type of support provided, on-site to online/telephonic

Need to provide tech support for employees 24x7, and during peak times. Lack of empathy quite common

Staff reallocation to support critical applications versus non-critical

INTERVENTIONS & SOLUTION SOUGHT



Added online chat/ self-help options

Additional hotlines and tech service agents arranged, live helpdesks with audio/video support in place



Late-hours support arranged, additional *24x7 tech support added, with issues and resolutions regularly logged

Emotionally charged situations need HR support



Provision of in-house tech support for specific content/apps, additional support procured for hardware/network connectivity issues (mostly outsourced)

END USERS FACE
A DIFFERENT SET
OF CHALLENGES,
NEVER FACED
BEFORE...

01

Collaboration

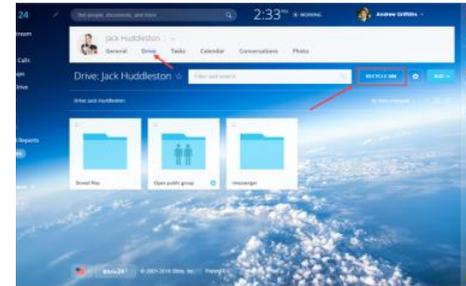
There is a need for stronger online collaboration across teams within the organisation, some of these have never interacted online before. Seamless looking tasks and timelines are disrupted.



02

Cloud services

Part of business applications and solutions that used to be in a hosted environment within the enterprise network, need to be shared on a cloud platform or made available beyond enterprise networks.



03

Work Environment

Accessories and devices that were never required at home are suddenly in demand. People replicate tasks to be done in office environment at home, driving the need for devices and accessories.



How are you tackling collaboration challenges?



BIGGEST CHALLENGES & ISSUES



INTERVENTIONS & SOLUTION SOUGHT

Face to face meetings, group meetings are no longer possible. But collaboration cannot stop...



Zoom, Zoom plus, MS Teams, Google Hangouts have become default solutions

People are becoming more smarter with background options, managing privacy and being punctual on these meetings

Sharing of files, amendments, version controls can clog emails or local storage...



Office 365, Google documents, SharePoint have increased usage

People are more cognizant of deadlines as their timelines impact the work of others in their team

We can no longer pop into someone's cabin or call them whenever we want...



Group / team calendars, status updates and WhatsApp/ group chats show increased use

People are developing the discipline of booking team members time in advance and sending calendar invites than disturbing abruptly

How are you tackling the need for accessing applications?



BIGGEST CHALLENGES & ISSUES



Not all data that is available within the enterprise network is accessible from home

Extra caution is needed when accessing data as the interface is different

Some of the apps are slower to update, do not refresh easily and need to be fed again

INTERVENTIONS & SOLUTION SOUGHT



Logging in via VPN is one of the easiest solutions

Getting data in bytes from people who have VPN or logging through mobile that is registered on the network is another method (though not sure and mostly prevalent in smaller organisations)

People are downloading files on local storage, updating them and then reloading with version control

Screen grabs and WhatsApp shares (not secure though) are some shortcuts that are prevalent

People log in early (before most others) or late in the day (when others are asleep) and access applications that are slow

Updating in batches is the common practice

How are you tackling the need to replicate a working environment at your home?



BIGGEST CHALLENGES & ISSUES



For specific sectors and departments there is a need to have bigger or multiple screens while working

Printing at home is not the same, at times printouts are not available

Physical assets such as stamping, signatures and attestations are difficult. Privacy is an issue.

INTERVENTIONS & SOLUTION SOUGHT



Some offices have made available larger/multiple screens

When such screens are not available, people are merely zooming in/increasing font size or display size



Using home printers and printing in black & white are common solutions

Some people have been provided with printers by their offices (especially those working in administration, finance and legal services)



Digital signatures, digital stamping and online attestations used more often

Online services for such needs used for the first time in many organisations.

What does this mean for technology brands playing in this space...

Accommodate low network speed scenarios

Applications and services have to accommodate inferior network speeds. UX on lower speeds needs to be optimal to get work done. Low speed/bandwidth options need to be developed within BCP strategy with local hosting and mirroring wherever possible.

Manuals and guides need to be end user friendly

People may need to deploy or start using hardware/software for the first time at home. User manuals that are end user centric, with laymen language are better suited. The language for many manuals assume the IT team to be end users.

Collaboration solutions can have less formal front ends

Most of the collaboration solutions have a very formal front end, they lack a human touch/ look & feel. Incorporating emojis or icons in chat options, personalisation including background selection can be very effective.

Hardware that is SOHO focussed has better appeal

This is the best time to recommend SOHO (self office home office) solutions be it single function printers, multi-function printers, scanners, computer screens, keyboards, hand rests or ergonomically designed chairs/desks.



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