

NetSupport Manager 12.10

A mixture of sophisticated and easy-to-use support tools packaged into a well-designed console

SCORE

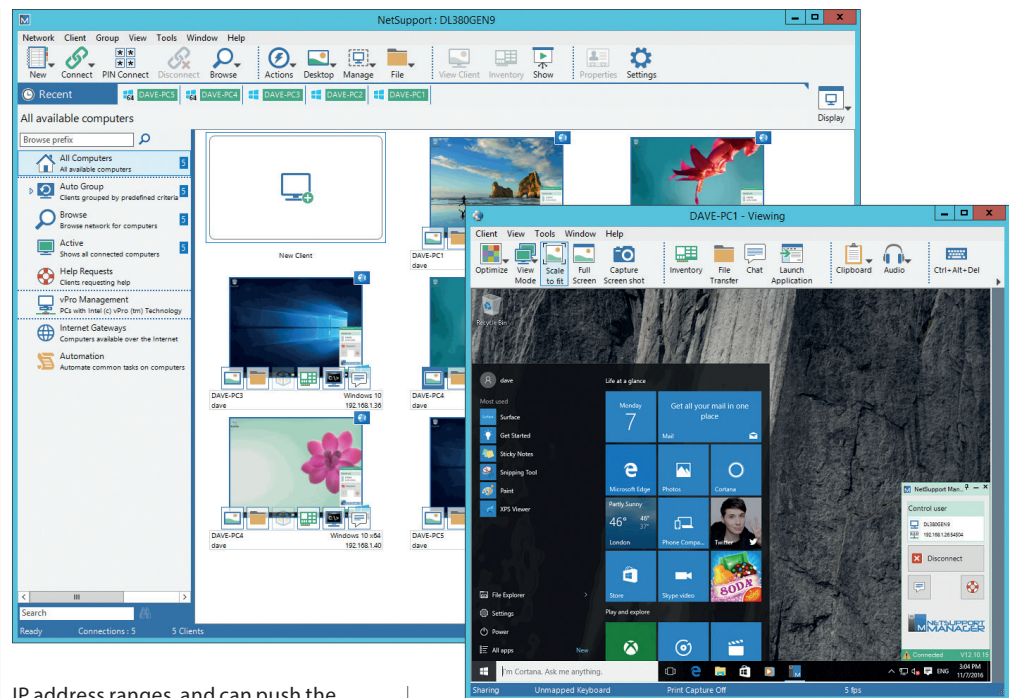
PRICE 1-500 systems, £25 each exc VAT from netsupportmanager.com

NetSupport Manager (NSM) must be doing something right: it's now into its third decade. And since we first reviewed it way back in 1995, we've watched it mature into one of the finest remote support tools on the market.

NSM offers a wealth of features, including top-notch remote control, file transfer, text or two-way audio chat and recording facilities, as well as detailed hardware and software inventory capabilities. The NSM Control console provides easy access to all systems, with a nifty active thumbnail view that makes it easy to monitor multiple systems at once and see what users are doing in real-time.

This version brings enhancements over the last major release, including macOS Sierra support and an option to apply bandwidth restrictions over wireless connections. Future updates promise to add Windows PowerShell integration, video enhancements for Windows 8 clients, and performance improvements for file transfer over Gigabit Ethernet.

Installation and deployment are a piece of cake. The Deploy tool handles network discovery for Active Directory domains, workgroups and



IP address ranges, and can push the NSM client to every device, using profiles to determine how it will function on each managed system.

Once you're set up, the Control console makes light work of locating and connecting to a system. It can display all that are available, filter by machine name if you're after one in particular, or list only those that are requesting help. It offers a dynamic grouping feature that automatically sorts systems into groups running Windows, OS X, Linux and Chrome OS. You can also create custom groups – perhaps to organise clients by business unit or by location – and drag and drop selected systems into them.

When it's time to connect, remote control sessions are started by double-clicking the client's icon in the main Control pane. You can choose to control, share or view their screen. Each icon also has a quick-access toolbar beneath that provides

LEFT NetSupport Manager's superbly designed Control console puts every support tool at your fingertips



one-click access to file transfer, Registry edit, chat or inventory tools.

Other tools are as easy to access, via a menu ribbon along the top of the remote control viewer. Along with selecting viewing screen modes, you can launch a local app, take a screen capture, have text and audio chats, share clipboards and reboot the client.

You can also show your Control screen to single or multiple clients – useful, perhaps, for training. You can even make recordings of Control system activity, save them locally and replay them to clients.

Security shouldn't be a worry, as NSM can integrate with AD policies, password-protect client machines, enforce encryption and even use smart cards. User profiles determine

“Security shouldn't be a worry: NSM can integrate with AD policies, password-protect client machines and even use smart cards”

what support staff can do on remote systems and distributed networks.

The Gateway component creates secure, AES-256-encrypted connections over the internet. The PIN Connect server also offers

an easy security model, requiring the technician and user to enter the same unique PIN to create a connection.

NSM also supports the SMB and enterprise versions of Intel's vPro, and its hardware and software inventory includes lists of apps, processes, hotfixes and services – which can be remotely stopped, started or paused.

In short, NetSupport Manager delivers everything your support department is likely to want, with tight connection security and a slick central console. Best of all is the flexible pricing structure, with 1-500 endpoints costing a very reasonable £25 each for a perpetual licence.

LEFT We remotely supported an OS X system from our iPad using NSM's handy iOS Control app

