

»» A New Model of Desktop Support



Established in 1973, Lynx Technology is a successful IT solutions and support company with nine locations throughout the UK, more than 500 employees and revenues of £32.8 million (in the financial year ending 30th September 2002).

Lynx offers a comprehensive solutions portfolio ranging from consultancy and implementation through infrastructure, networks and security to managed services. The latter are handled from the company's custom-built headquarters in Barlborough, near Chesterfield, which delivers remote and field services around the clock to thousands of PC users across the UK.

Like many companies in the IT sector, Lynx is always looking for ways to grow the business and improve customers' experience. In February 2003, Lynx achieved both these goals by introducing a new and exciting service: the ability to diagnose and solve problems remotely on servers, PCs or laptops – without the need for customers to purchase or permanently install any software.

Elegant and cost-effective

Lynx delivers remote support services using LANDesk® Instant Support Suite Pro. This enables Lynx's helpdesk engineers to temporarily take control of a user's desktop to diagnose and fix problems. Any user with a Web browser and access to the Internet can benefit from the service because it runs over a secure Internet connection.

The Lynx helpdesk engineer directs users to a Web page via a secure link where, after entering their name and email address, they click a button to temporarily install the required LANDesk software. Within minutes, the engineer is able to access the user's computer remotely and begin to diagnose its problem. When the support session is over, the temporary software automatically uninstalls itself from the user's machine.

In addition to remote diagnosis and problem solving, the solution also provides real-time information about the user's system and allows the engineer and user to 'chat' online or exchange files if necessary. Screen draw tools enable support engineers to train users to solve many of their own problems.

Business Needs

- Cost-effective, scalable PC desktop management solution

Solution

- LANDesk® Instant Support Suite Pro

Business Benefits

- Remote control feature reduces the cost of helpdesk support
- Better able to discover and manage hardware and software assets
- Increased ability to budget and control IT costs



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TECHNICAL CONSULTANT

LYNX TECHNOLOGY

LANDesk Instant Support Suite Pro runs on a Compaq* DL 380 G2 server at Lynx’s hosting centre in Leeds. Lynx monitors the system continuously from its headquarters using remote tools.

“It’s elegant and cost effective,” says Ben Hall, a Pre-Sales Technical Consultant at Lynx. “Most importantly, it opens up a whole new world of opportunities both for our customers and for Lynx as an IT provider.”

Tremendous flexibility

In fact, LANDesk Instant Support Suite Pro quickly proved its worth to Lynx. Colin Saunders, SRSC and Hosting Manager at Lynx, takes up the story:

“Because the service is available to anyone with a Web browser and connection to the Internet, it allows us, for the first time, to offer remote support to users who do not have access to an enterprise system such as LANDesk® Management Suite,” he says. “It also gives us tremendous flexibility; we can help customers with existing contracts as well as individuals or companies without a contract who require support on an ad-hoc basis.”

In its field services division, where Lynx employs 180 break/fix engineers, LANDesk Instant Support Suite Pro is delivering numerous benefits. Colin Saunders again: “It gives us quick and easy diagnostics, so we can actually help field services to diagnose problems and give the engineers better information up-front that helps them decide how to handle each specific case. And, if it’s a software problem, we can fix it remotely so customers don’t have to wait for an engineer to arrive on site.”

Enthusiastic response

Initial customer reaction to the new service has been a mixture of enthusiasm and amazement. “Customers are delighted that problems can be fixed so quickly and are amazed at how simple the process is,” says Colin Saunders.

For example, while evaluating the service prior to implementation, Ben Hall was able to fix a problem on a server located at an investment bank in the City of London in around 10 minutes. The bank’s network security systems remained intact and Lynx was able to minimise the server downtime – satisfying the customer beyond their wildest dreams.

New business opportunities

The customer benefits of the service are easy to see. Colin Saunders summarises: “They get an early solution to a high percentage of problems so their costs are lowered and employee efficiency goes up. The service also removes some of the barriers that deter customers from using remote control, such as having to physically change their firewalls or install something on their PCs. It’s about peace of mind.”

Customers are not the only ones to benefit; Lynx is also enjoying increased cost efficiencies. Colin Saunders estimates that between 70 and 80 per cent of all software problems can be diagnosed and fixed remotely, reducing the requirement to deploy field resources through Lynx’s use of the LANDesk Instant Support Suite Pro. This means that field engineers can be assigned to new support contracts with little or no additional cost to the bottom line.

The remote service is also a catalyst for developing new business with existing clients, as Colin Saunders explains. “The fact that we can diagnose problems for the hardware break/fix team means that we can also fix them. And if they’re not covered by the customer’s existing contract, this gives us an opportunity to sell in new products.”

Return on investment

Lynx is ramping up its usage of LANDesk Instant Support Suite to show a rapid return on a relatively low investment. "The licensing model is very attractive to us because it is priced on a per helpdesk console basis, not a per user basis," says Ben Hall. "We have found the software to be easy to deploy and use, so the cost of ownership is equally attractive."

Ultimately, with a solution that can be deployed so widely, there is great potential for growth for Lynx when developing the service. "The obvious benefit is that it doesn't discriminate between corporate and home users," Ben Hall continues. "If we get the marketing right, any customer in any environment can call us and we could sort out the problem on their PC."

In the short-term, Lynx intends to re-sell LANDesk Instant Support Suite Pro to organisations with their own customer support requirements, such as software vendors. The company will also seek to take advantage of opportunities in the enterprise market, in particular among companies with mobile employees who use laptops.

Colin Saunders concludes: "LANDesk Instant Support Suite Pro is an exciting development for us. It won't replace systems like LANDesk Management Suite and it won't eliminate the need for hardware engineers in the field, but it will reduce customers' costs and greatly increase their satisfaction with our service. As a result, we will also save money, while reducing customer churn and opening up a number of new markets. Everybody wins!"

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LYNX TECHNOLOGY



Corporate Headquarters

698 West 10000 South

Suite 500

South Jordan, Utah 84095

www.landesk.com

FOR PRODUCT INFORMATION

U.S. and Canada + 1-800-982-2130

Europe + 44 (0) 118-902-6200

Ireland + 353-1-469-3726

Japan + 81 (3) 3435-8261

Brazil + (55-11) 3048-4080

Mexico + 52-55-5261-4340

China + 8610-8518-3138

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