



## PRODUCT REVIEW – NETSUPPORT MANAGER

### Supportive Software Equals Stronger IT Management

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**By Vincent A. Randazzese,**  
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NetSupport Software is a vendor that has been bringing remote-control functionality to the desktop for years. In 1989, the company launched a 16-bit DOS remote-control application and has improved on the product year after year with its newest improvement coming in the 9.5 version.

The newest NetSupport Manager includes features that will provide IT administrators with greater management, monitoring and security capabilities. For security purposes, with this latest release, administrators can adjust encryption levels from 56-bit to 256-bit, depending on the company environment. It also provides integration with Active Directory, which reduces maintenance costs and improves the overall efficiency of network administration by providing secure and consolidated network access for all users.

Interactive Thumbnails, another new feature in version 9.5, allows for realtime active spying. Administrators can look in on any client machine to see if what employees currently have on their desktop is what they are supposed to be working on. Thumbnail size can be adjusted on the fly for an expanded view of the selected networked PC.

The incorporated file transfer feature is another nice touch the software offers and is very easy to use. Administrators can simply drag and drop files or any group of files to one or multiple PCs. Even though the software is not necessarily geared toward remote-control software deployment, administrators can use this functionality for that purpose, up to a certain point.

There also is a built-in delta file transfer, which allows for lost file transfers to pick up and start off where and when they lose the connection. All admins will have to do is re-establish the connection and the file transfer feature will start right back up. This can save a tremendous amount of time and manpower.

The file distribution feature worked well, and CRN Test Center engineers were able to transfer a plethora of different files--including .gif, .exe, and .inf files--to five different remote PCs simultaneously.

For companies who want to incorporate one-to-one audio support, NetSupport Manager provides full bi-directional functionality as long as the end user has a microphone and some sort of speakers.

With audits becoming the norm rather than the exception these days, businesses of all sizes need to know what is on their network and NetSupport's solution has incorporated an inventory tracker. CRN engineers found it concise, and it provided a nice visual as to what is on each client machine. The built-in gateway functionality is an alternate method of connecting to different client machines through firewalls. The gateway almost acts as a proxy server and can provide IT

managers connection to all different client machines without having to configure firewalls and routers for port forwarding.

Installation requires a small agent to be installed on the client machines and the software includes a deploy utility that allows for a mass deployment--whether it is over a VPN or network through one central machine. The agent provided no lag time, even when remotely managing the machine. It only uses about 3 Kbytes to 4 Kbytes of RAM at any given time. Installation of the software was so easy that *CRN* Test Center engineers fear integration of the software could be completed by the least-experienced IT staffs. Hopefully, this will not result in the integrator or solution provider to losing service opportunities.

With most remote-control products, pricing relies entirely on volume and the same applies here; one volume license will run \$99; 100 licenses are \$48.72, a significant reduction.

A two-level channel program keeps things simple for prospective partners. Broken into Authorized and Premier levels, the program offers profits via margins and associated support. Margin levels range from 10 percent to 25 percent for Authorized partners, while Premier partners can expect 25 percent to 40 percent margins. Partners are expected to attend sales and technical training, pursue an active and successful promotion of product line and meet or exceed revenue targets. Approved partners can expect a dedicated account manager, pre-sales training, marketing collateral and access to a secure on-line web portal. Premier partners get all that and more in the form of lead generation/qualified leads, higher margin and marketing co-op funds. Support is offered free of charge for all partners and their customers. Online live support and an online knowledge base are also available.

**NETSUPPORT MANAGER 9.5**

> **Company:**  
NetSupport Software  
Alpharetta, Ga.  
(770) 205-4456  
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> **Tech Rating:** ★★★★★

> **Channel Rating:** ★★★★★

> **Distributors/Integrators:**  
Direct from vendor

Note: Recommended status is earned with a score of at least eight stars out of 10.

