

MARKET WATCH

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Latest NetSupport Release Has Unique Features for Its Class

The latest version of NetSupport DNA is aimed at small and medium-size businesses, but it has asset - management features typically offered in applications aimed at bigger companies.

[NetSupport Inc.](#), a U.K.-based publisher of desktop management, support and help-desk software, says version 2.0 of the suite targets businesses that have 10 to 500 desktops. Released in September, the suite includes such corporate-level capabilities as software and hardware discovery (Windows platforms only), software distribution, query and reporting tools, extendable and customizable data fields, software metering, a help-desk module and remote control.

Also setting this product apart from others in its category are Web application usage monitoring and the ability to control Web site access. These features usually come under the realm of firewall, Web management or infrastructure tools—which many organizations already have. NetSupport DNA takes the extra step of integrating data from the usage of Web and Windows applications with management data, combining both in one repository. This allows the business-focused IT user to easily access and report on usage and compliance.

From the NetSupport DNA control center, the administrator can set access parameters for use of applications and Web sites, effectively guaranteeing compliance with Windows software license agreements.

Most other Windows client-based products we've reviewed have limited reporting capabilities. Not so with NetSupport DNA, which is easy to use and navigate. Reporting takes the form of text lists and full-color graphs and charts built right into the interface. Data is presented logically, alongside a tree-structured hierarchical navigation bar, additional reports from a drop-down menu and an integrated query screen.

Larger enterprises with diverse platforms (e.g., UNIX, Linux, Apple) that need to create customized user roles and profiles may find NetSupport DNA lacking in the areas of user-rights management, procurement, workflow management, event notification and management of contracts and software - license agreements. For these more complex environments, NetSupport DNA could be deployed as a point solution for specifically managing the Windows platform. Using ECP's assessment tool, the suite scored 3.2 on a scale of one to five, meeting expectations in most areas.

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