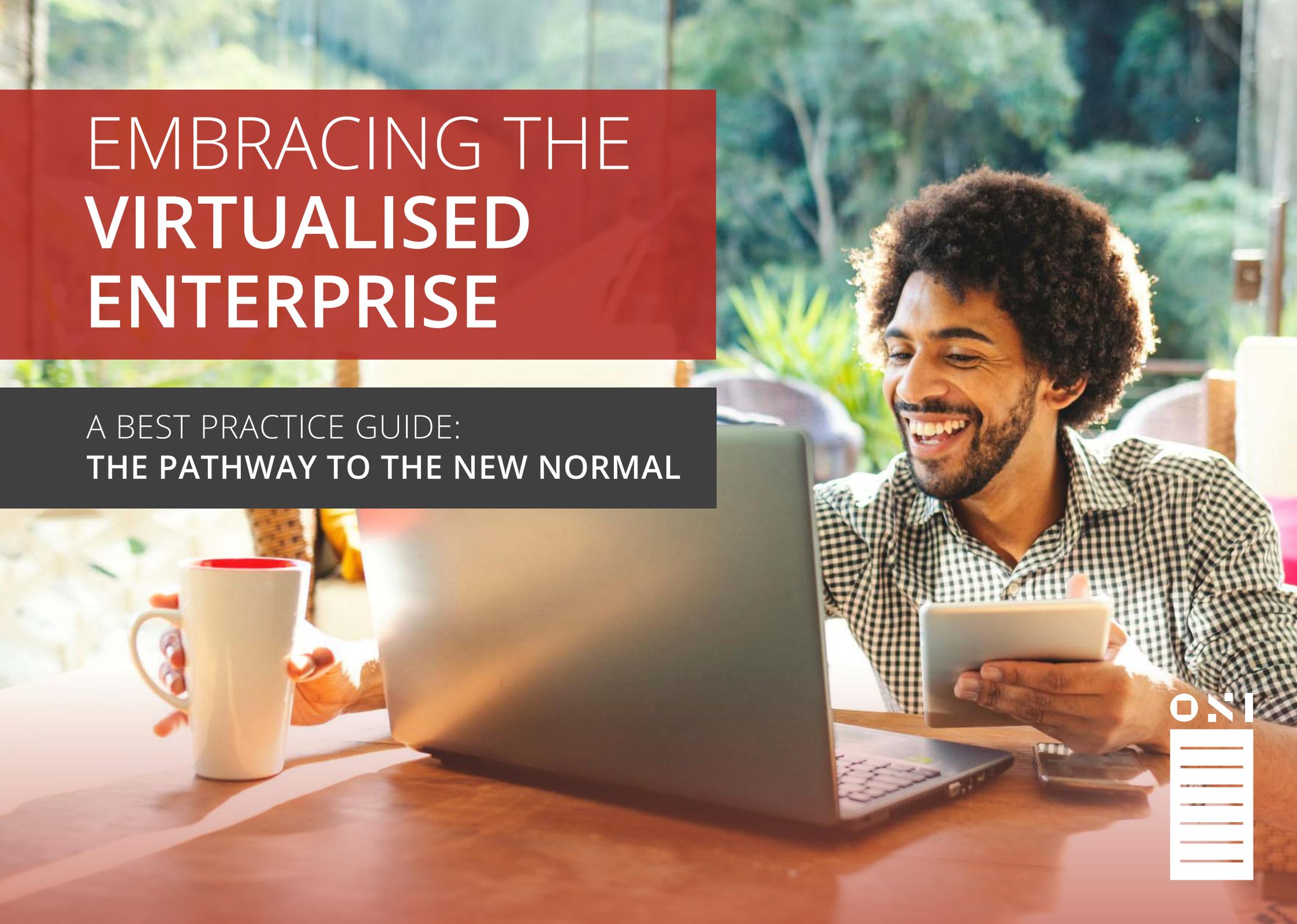


EMBRACING THE VIRTUALISED ENTERPRISE

A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE:
THE PATHWAY TO THE NEW NORMAL



THE REALISATION OF A NEW NORMAL

In 2019, 1.7 million people in the UK mainly worked from home, accounting for 5% of the working population. Amid the Covid-19 crisis in April 2020, ONS figures showed that this proportion had increased to 49.2%, an almost ten-fold jump, with as many as 90% of non-essential office staff working from home.

Although it is expected that people will start returning to the office as restrictions ease, there is growing consensus that things will not return to pre-Covid working and that there will be an significant increase in flexible working in what is being described as the new normal.

Employees have long shown a preference to home working and many employers have not only proven this is possible, but can see many advantages of embracing this model.

This best practice guide explores what the pathway to a new normal will look like and how organisations technically enable the virtualised enterprise.

We have experienced a ten-fold increase in people working from home from 5% in 2019 to 49.2% in April 2020.

WHAT EMPLOYEES PERCEIVE AS THE BENEFITS



91%

Better Work-Life Balance



79%

Improved Productivity



78%

Avoid Commuting



78%

Less Stress

THE BENEFITS TO YOUR ORGANISATION



35%

reduction in estate costs is possible with <20% shift to home working



82%

of millennials say workplace technology would influence their ability to accept a new job



87%

of people want to work flexibly, increasing your talent pool



85%

of business see an increase in productivity

CREATING A PATHWAY TO THE NEW NORMAL

For many organisations, enabling employees to work from home has been a challenge, piecing together a series of quick-fixes to allow people to connect to the systems they need and to collaborate with colleagues.

Although limitations are acceptable given the pace at which we have had to change, if the virtualised enterprise is going to play a part in your new normal, then you must develop a plan that addresses immediate needs while progressing you down a pathway to supporting a truly distributed workforce.

This plan needs to re-imagine your organisation as a virtual enterprise. It needs to take into account your

peoples' needs, changes in work practices and align your technology to these new requirements.

You also need to look at how you change the support and management of your IT environment to cater for the fact that many workers will spend a significant proportion of their time remote.

We believe there are five stages that form the pathway to the virtualised enterprise: Enable, Plan, Implement, Support and Optimise. We will expand on these a little later.



Enable:

Ensure your employees are effective in lockdown.

Plan:

Re-imagine the organisation as a virtual enterprise.

Implement:

People, processes & technology for effective working.

Support:

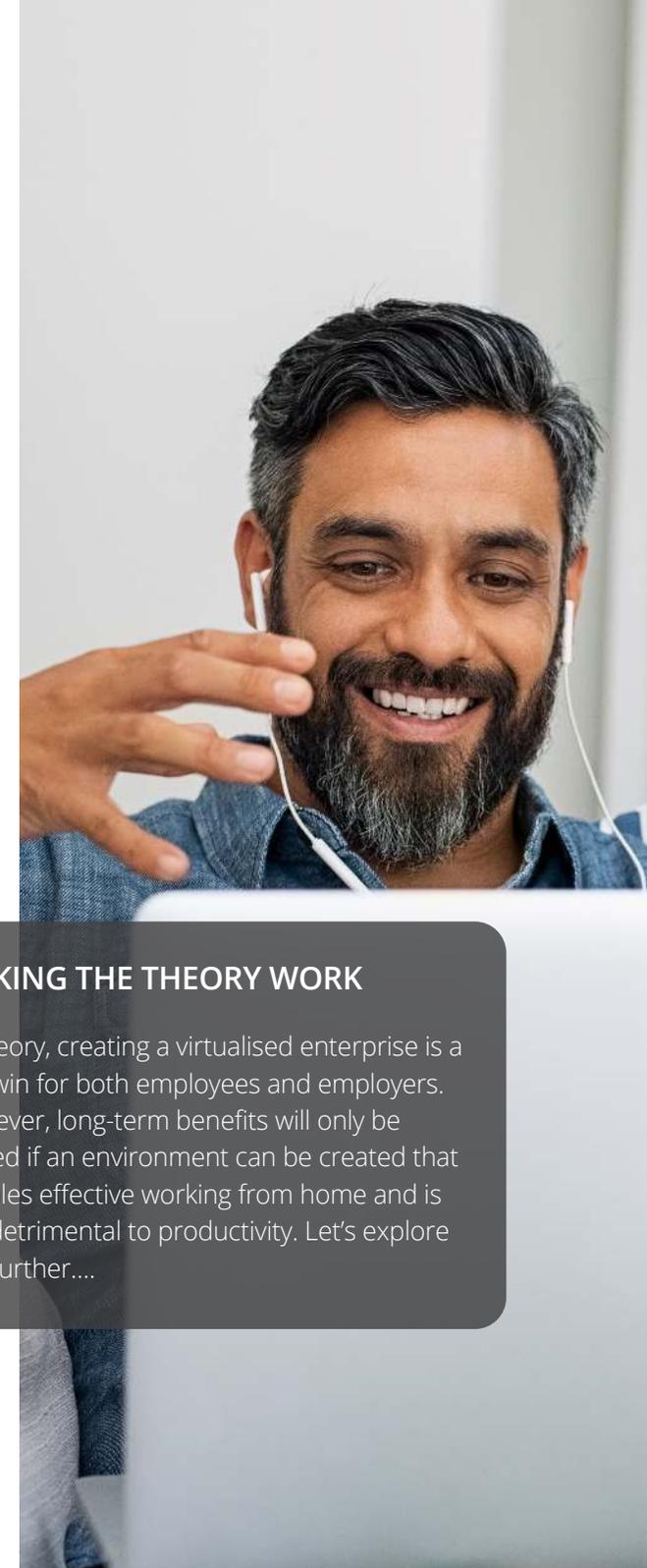
Adopting best practice to support your virtual organisation.

Optimise:

Continually review, refine and improve working practices.

MAKING THE THEORY WORK

In theory, creating a virtualised enterprise is a win-win for both employees and employers. However, long-term benefits will only be gained if an environment can be created that enables effective working from home and is not detrimental to productivity. Let's explore this further....



CONNECTING A VIRTUALISED COMPANY

Most organisations have been able to support employees connecting into corporate systems from home. However, up until now this has mainly been relatively few employees for some of the time. Now we need to consider how we enable many more employees connecting remotely for most of the time, which means the rules are slightly different.

According to a recent survey, 85% of businesses embracing remote working saw an increase in productivity.

Such productivity increases can be quickly eroded if end-users regularly experience connectivity issues or a marked drop in application response times.

Home workers must feel that they have what they need to be effective. They cannot feel like the poor relation to someone working in the office. Their work environment must be aligned to their needs, and be reliable and responsive.

AREAS TO CONSIDER

With more people working remotely, you will need to look at your IT infrastructure and adjust this for virtualisation. Key areas include:

Accelerating Cloud Adoption

With less of a need to locate business critical applications in key offices, greater performance, scalability and resilience can be gained from accelerating your move to cloud. Refactoring key applications for cloud can deliver significant performance benefits to remote users.

SD-WAN

You should consider placing more intelligence into how your remote workers connect into the corporate network, enabling local breakout to public cloud services and the internet, while minimising traffic through central locations.

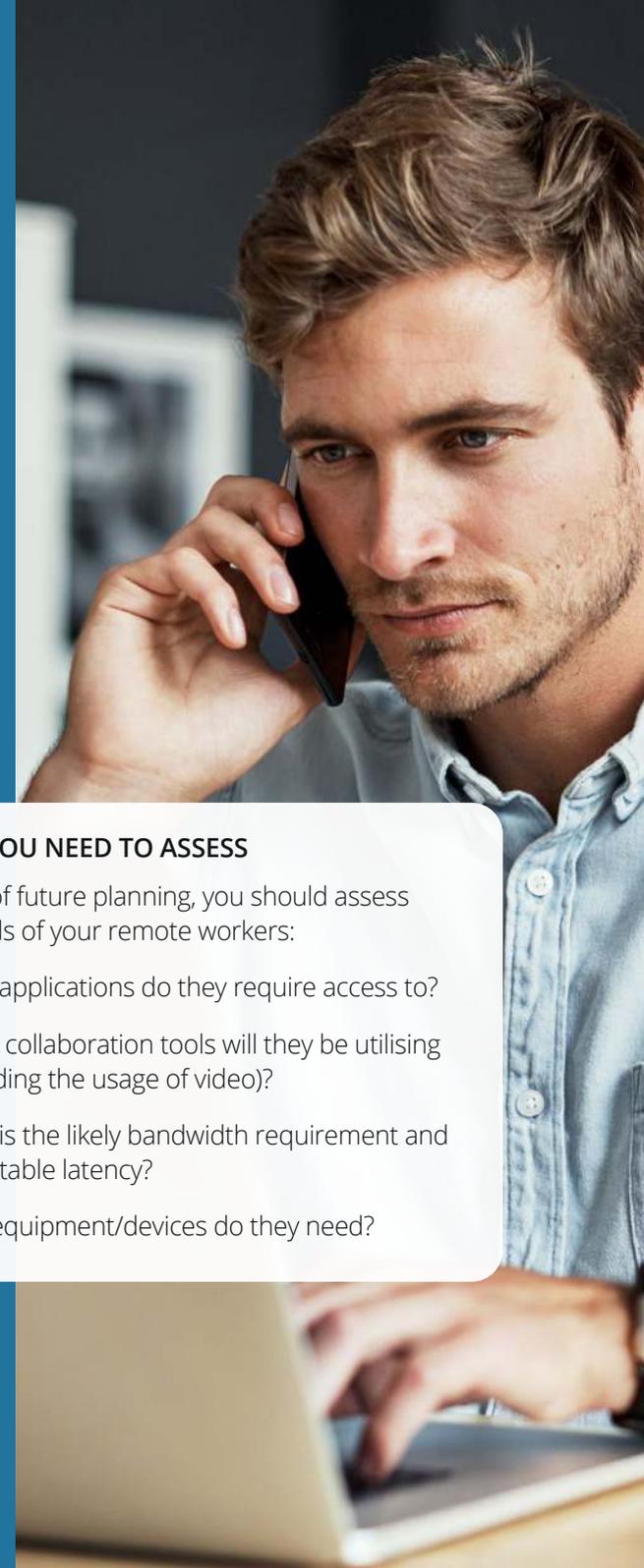
End-User Devices

It is important that home workers have the equipment they need to be effective. Do they have cameras for video meetings? Do they require a monitor, printer or scanner?

WHAT YOU NEED TO ASSESS

As part of future planning, you should assess the needs of your remote workers:

- What applications do they require access to?
- What collaboration tools will they be utilising (including the usage of video)?
- What is the likely bandwidth requirement and acceptable latency?
- What equipment/devices do they need?



SECURING THE VIRTUALISED ENVIRONMENT

When employees operate inside your physical offices and are directly connected to your corporate network, you have full control as to how you secure their environment and protect your data.

The challenge is how you maintain this level of protection when people work from home, utilising domestic grade WiFi to connect through the public internet to your business-critical applications and corporate data.

A recent Threatpost poll found that 40% of organisations have seen an increase in cyberattacks as they enabled remote working

There is also the wider Information Security challenge, with potentially sensitive data being exposed to people outside of the work environment and greater risks of data leakage.

AREAS TO CONSIDER

Cyber and Information Security is a constantly changing environment. It is key that you have the processes in place to mitigate, detect and remediate threats across your virtualised enterprise. You may want to consider:

Access Management

Utilising policy-based control to enforce who has access to which systems and data, at what time, from which locations.

End-User Device/DNS-Level Security

You will need to focus more on protecting end-user devices. This can be achieved through device level security applications and utilising the latest DNS-Level security services.

Advanced Malware Protection

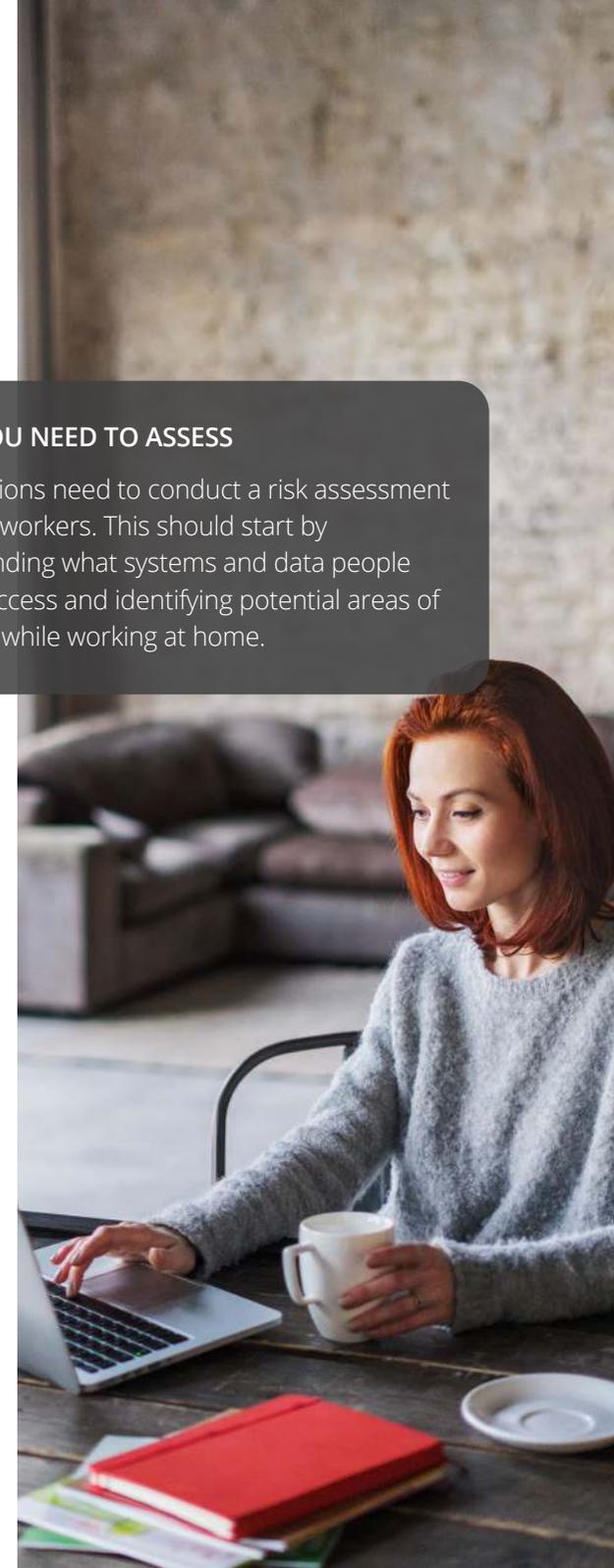
With an increasing risk of malware, should you be thinking of ensuring that advanced malware protection is provided on end-user devices.

Secure Remote Access

Leverage the range of services available including VPN, two-factor authentication and point-to-point encryption.

WHAT YOU NEED TO ASSESS

Organisations need to conduct a risk assessment for home workers. This should start by understanding what systems and data people need to access and identifying potential areas of exposure while working at home.



MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LEVEL OF COLLABORATION

Although we have all got used to working with geographically dispersed colleagues and collaborating over video and web-based meetings, it is the informal chance meetings and conversations that are absent when we work at home.

It is important that we do not just look at replicating the office-based UC and collaboration tools at home, but that we also address any gaps that can lead to employees becoming disconnected.

The State of Remote Working Report shows the top two struggles of working from home as being Loneliness (21%) and Communication/ Collaboration (21%).

We need to make it easy and intuitive for colleagues to collaborate both formally and informally, for all employee meetings to be effective and most importantly for home workers to be accessible to customers.

AREAS TO CONSIDER

There is an abundance of tools and applications to support collaboration, many of which overlap in capabilities. Understanding what to adopt enterprise-wide to support different requirements is key.

Cloud-Based Unified Communications

Is it time to migrate to a cloud-based UC platform? One that connects the entire workforce, regardless of their location, and enables you customers to reach employees working from home.

Web-Meetings

Which applications do you use for quick catch-ups, huddle meetings, regular team meetings and collaboration with customers?

Chat & Collaboration Tools

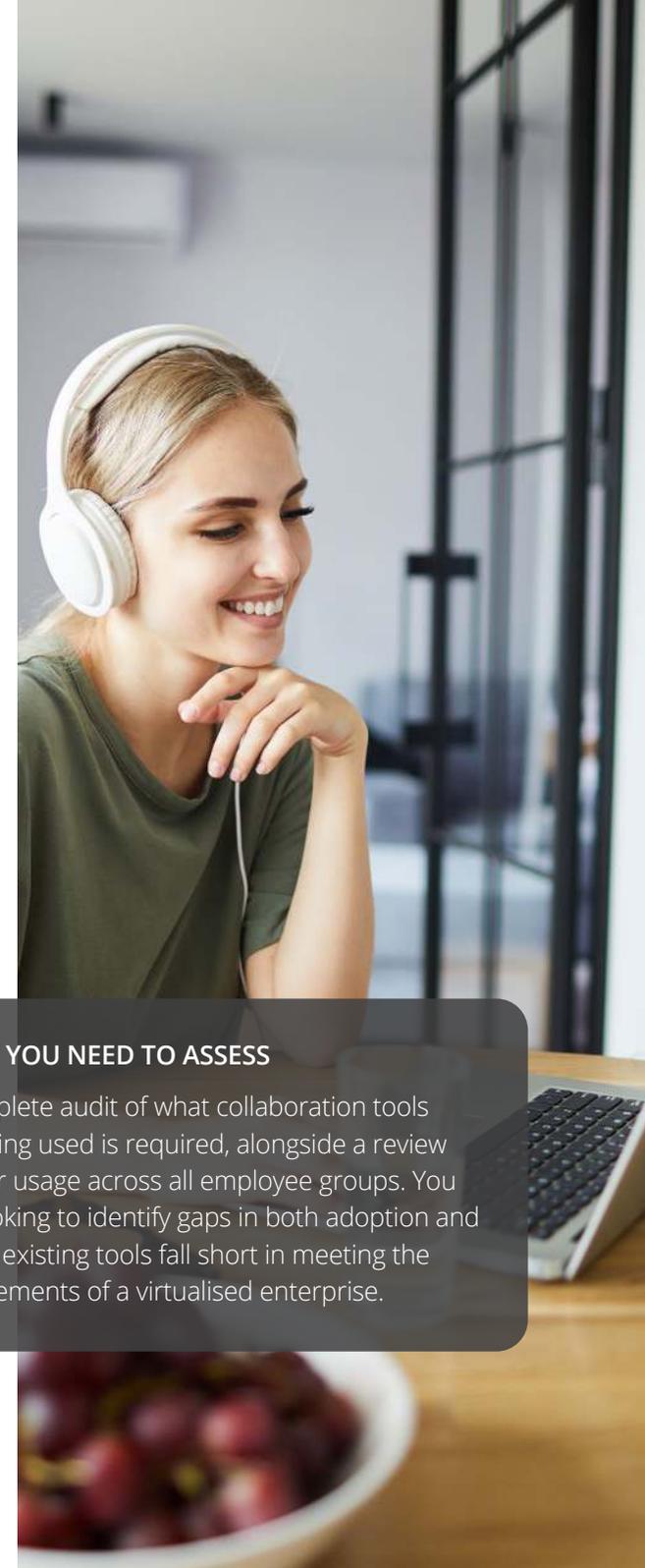
As more people look to use IM rather than email, how do you standardise the tools being used and facilitate better virtual team working?

Video

How can you create a culture that maintains virtual face-to-face interaction, and ensure you have the technical capability to support it?

WHAT YOU NEED TO ASSESS

A complete audit of what collaboration tools are being used is required, alongside a review of their usage across all employee groups. You are looking to identify gaps in both adoption and where existing tools fall short in meeting the requirements of a virtualised enterprise.



SUPPORTING A REMOTE WORKFORCE

Remote workers present new challenges for IT support. They range from the inevitable connectivity issues via infrastructure not owned or managed by your company, through to the usual technical issues that would be easier to fix in an office environment.

There is also the fact that, at home, we tend to work longer and more flexible hours. This means that IT support can no longer be a 9 to 5 service but has to extend to cover the hours that people are working.

According to an ITV Report, over 40% of employees working from home in April 2020 state they are working longer hours than when they were office based.

IT teams also have to rethink proactive management and maintenance tasks, for example ensuring remote devices are backed-up, patched and running the latest version of local application software.

AREAS TO CONSIDER

Adapting your IT function to support a geographically dispersed workforce will require changes to policy, process and the tools that are being used. Some areas of consideration include:

IT Helpdesk

Do you require to extend the hours you provide helpdesk coverage? Do you need to increase capacity to meet demand, or consider working with a managed services partner to provide this?

Cloud Back-up & Recovery

Utilising cloud services to back-up remote devices and to provide simple to use applications to recover everything from a single file to a reloading a device.

Remote Device Management

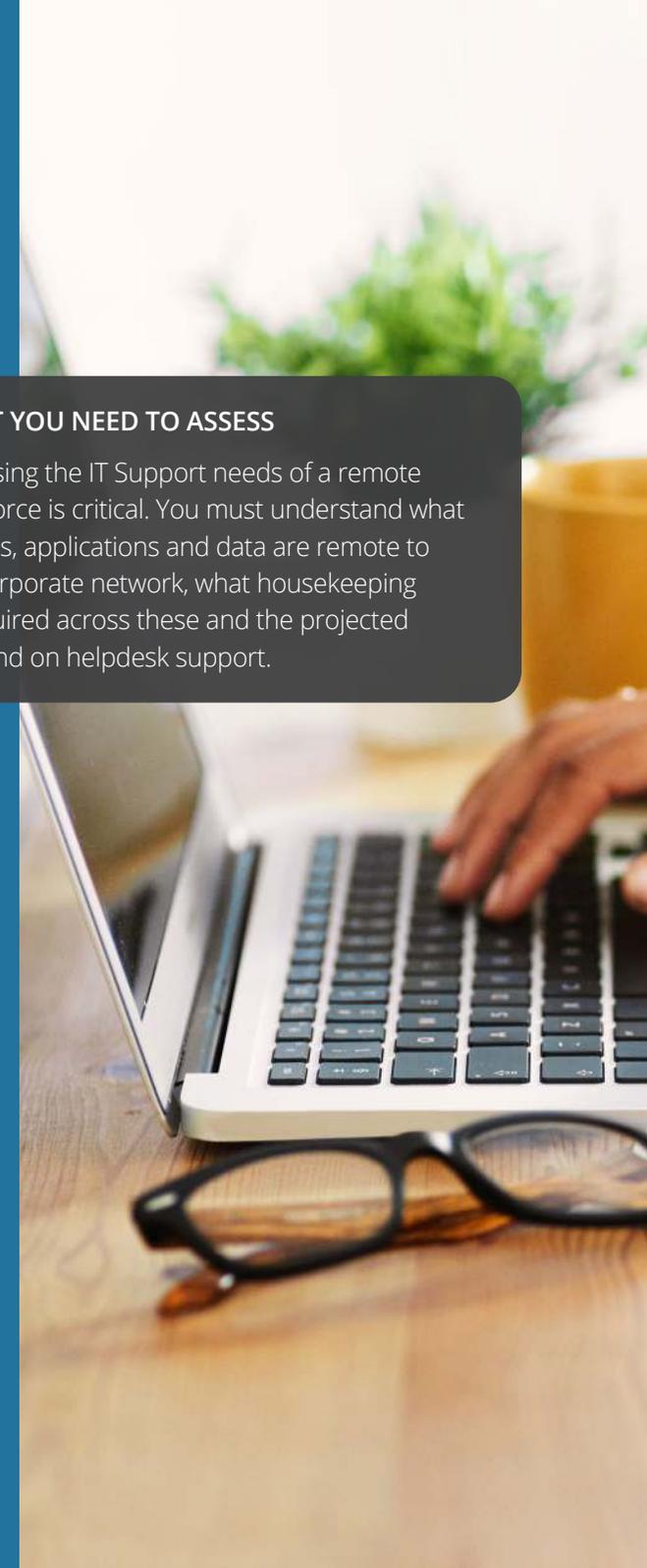
The ability to take remote control of a device, either to perform maintenance or to lock the device in the case of it being lost or stolen.

Utilisation of Managed Services

Ranging from providing extended hour helpdesk coverage, through to a fully managed service that proactively supports and manages your complete remote worker IT environment.

WHAT YOU NEED TO ASSESS

Assessing the IT Support needs of a remote workforce is critical. You must understand what devices, applications and data are remote to the corporate network, what housekeeping is required across these and the projected demand on helpdesk support.



HOW ONI CAN HELP YOU ON YOUR PATH

Established in 1992, ONI plc is a leading provider of IT solutions and services for both public and commercial customers. Privately owned, our focus is helping customers to gain the best possible advantage from their IT and communications infrastructure.

Our expertise and experience spans on-premises infrastructure and both the public and private cloud environments where we deliver solutions that address connectivity, networking, compute & storage, security and UC & collaboration.

As a company we take an agnostic approach. This means we put the needs of our customers first, taking the time to understand what you are trying to achieve and then architecting the IT solution that will deliver the outcome you are looking for.

We have helped many of our customers to quickly adapt to the Covid crisis and enable their people to be effective working at home. We are now helping these customers to plan and implement their pathway to what we anticipate as the new normal: The virtualised enterprise.

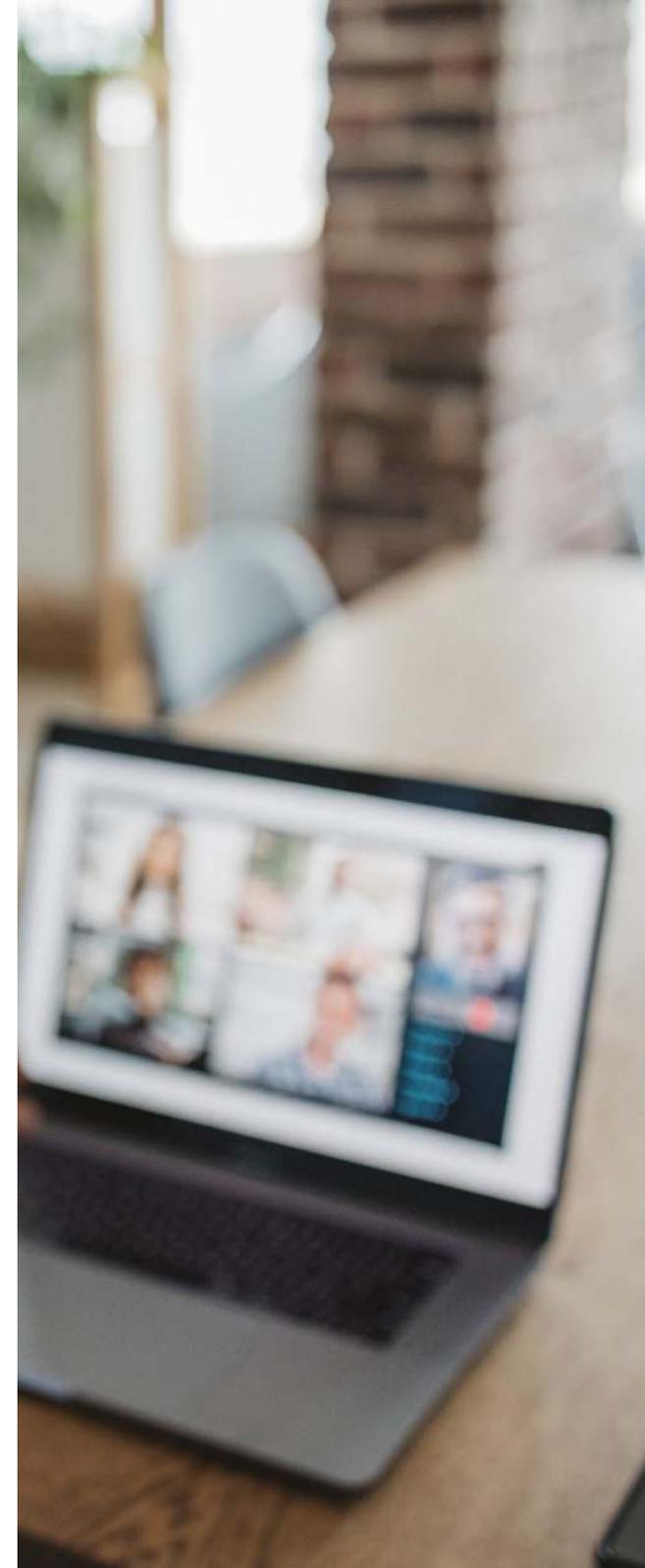
Our experience of navigating the complex world of technology and focus on aligning IT to the needs of the business perfectly positions us to help you in two areas:

ADDRESS TODAY'S CHALLENGES

Assisting with the gaps or issues you currently have in supporting a remote workforce and ensuring that while they are forced to work at home you are able to maximise their effectiveness.

ADAPT FOR TOMORROW

Helping you to identify the needs of your business moving forward, assess the different options available to you and quickly adapt your IT infrastructure and end-user environment to create the agility and flexibility required.





WHAT'S YOUR PATHWAY TO THE NEW NORMAL?

Like to discuss your requirements with one of our specialists, or receive guidance on your pathway to the new normal?

You can request a no-obligation consultation on our website by [clicking here](#).

AVAILABLE FROM ONI:

- Managed Services & Support
- Hosting & Colocation
- Networking & Connectivity
- Back-Up & Disaster Recovery
- Cybersecurity Solutions
- Contact Centre Solutions
- Mobility & Collaboration
- Unified Communications
- Public & Private Cloud Infrastructure



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Established in 1992, ONI plc is a leading provider of IT services and solutions. We deliver a unique blend of on-site, hybrid and Cloud computing systems, from our Tier 3+ UK data centres. Our workforce holds over 400 accreditations from vendors such as Cisco, VMware, NetApp, Veeam, Gamma, BT and Microsoft.