

# Operations

Butler Group Subscription Services

## Systems Management

### TECHNOLOGY AUDIT

#### LANDesk Software

##### LANDesk® Management Suite 8

**Abstract** *LANDesk® Management Suite 8 provides a suite of tools that enables organisations to manage their desktops servers, and mobile devices including handheld devices such as PDAs. Many IT administrators have no idea how many desktop PCs there are within the enterprise or that corporate information is now often stored on mobile devices. One of the strengths of LANDesk Management Suite 8 is the ability to monitor the usage of software, ensuring that the number of licences purchased correlates to the requirements of end-users. However, LANDesk needs to enhance mobile support into additional areas. LANDesk Management Suite 8 is ideally suited to any organisation with desktop devices or servers to manage. It can be evaluated by downloading a 45-day free trial version from the LANDesk Web site. Butler Group feels that it will particularly suit those organisations with medium to large numbers of desktop devices to manage, especially in distributed environments.*

#### KEY FINDINGS

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| ✓ | Includes auto discovery of all devices with an IP address. | ✓ | Remote control of PCs supported.                     |
| ✓ | Software inventory created.                                | ✓ | Users can be associated with specific devices.       |
| i | Users can be associated with particular devices.           | X | It needs to enhance mobile support into other areas. |

**Key:** ✓ Product Strength X Product Weakness i Point of Information

#### LOOK AHEAD

LANDesk Software plans future enhancements to LANDesk Management Suite. These include integrating some of the functionality of LANDesk Handheld Manager into the core product to enable handheld devices to be treated as a corporate device. Also enhancing mobile support into other areas such as device kill, remote control, and document synchronisation.

## ► FUNCTIONALITY

**Product Analysis** IT administrators are faced with a number of problems in a corporate world increasingly characterised by mergers and acquisitions. It is becoming increasingly difficult to keep an up-to-date inventory of devices within the enterprise especially in distributed environments. If the number of devices is not known then it is impossible to track the usage of software to ensure that the number of licences in use does not exceed the number purchased. It is also difficult to make sure that all licences purchased are used.

Another headache for administrators is software distribution, a process that can take months to complete in a distributed enterprise with thousands of desktops running different operating systems. Similarly operating system upgrades can also cause problems for the administrator that has to rebuild the user profile each time, and for end-users that are left to set up their desktops with their own preferences.

Problem resolution is another area of concern for many organisations, with the help desk simply providing a call logging facility, and a second or third level of support required to resolve the situation a lengthy process if a visit to the desktop is required.

LANDesk® Management Suite 8 addresses all of these problems. It is a suite of tools that are seamlessly integrated and accessed via a single easy-to-use console. LANDesk Management Suite 8 is the core product, which is required for all implementations. It incorporates an auto discovery feature, which Butler Group regards to be one of the strengths of the product. This identifies all devices with an IP address such as PCs, laptops, printers, routers, and switches including unmanaged devices using a layer 3 ping sweep. When new devices are added to the network they are auto discovered by LANDesk Management Suite 8, which can be set to perform recurring ping sweeps, and provide alerts when new devices are found.

User sessions are tracked so it is possible to associate users with particular devices, which Butler Group regards to be a valuable feature especially in a help desk situation.

An inventory is also created of all software installed on each device that is discovered. Each user session is logged so it is possible to build a picture of the licence usage throughout the enterprise. This provides valuable information for IT staff when determining the number of licences required for each application, and this in Butler Group's opinion, is another strength of the product.

A powerful feature is the software distribution facility, which although not unique, does in Butler Group's opinion, provide LANDesk Software with a differentiator in the way in which it achieves this. One of the problems of distributing software from a central console is the amount of bandwidth a mass download can take. LANDesk Software uses some innovative technology to reduce the bandwidth demand of a download.

The remote control feature is, Butler Group believes, another innovative feature, which enables an administrator to take control of a user's PC without having to visit the user. Used in conjunction with a help desk, it enables organisations to increase the number of logs resolved at the first call.

LANDesk Management Suite 8 also enables operating system deployment and migration. The strength of this feature is the ability to retain the profile information of the end-user, which is restored once the deployment is complete. This overcomes the problem of having to rebuild profile information manually.

In addition to the core product, there are a number of additional modules that provide extra functionality. These are:

- **LANDesk® Patch Manager 8** – Provides comprehensive and automated vulnerability assessment and patch management.
- **LANDesk® Server Manager 8** – Provides real-time hardware health monitoring, historical data collection, and remote crash recovery.
- **LANDesk® System Manager 8** – Provides real-time component-level monitoring to ensure system health, availability, security, and configuration integrity.
- **LANDesk® Handheld Manager 8** – Provides the ability to manage handheld devices.
- **LANDesk® Instant Support Suite** – This is an agentless product that allows the remote control of mobile devices.

## Product Operation

Architecturally, LANDesk Management Suite 8 is a client/server application, which has a 32-bit console as well as a browser-based console for remote management. The application is installed on a core LANDesk Management Suite 8 server, and agents are required on each device to be managed, but these are small in size, and there are a variety of ways in which they can be deployed.

Earlier versions of LANDesk Management Suite required two database schemas, one for holding the data, and the other a data mart for reporting purposes. LANDesk has now combined the two data schemas so that only one is necessary, although a rollup data mart can still be used, and is recommended for large implementations.

### Software Distribution

Efficient software distribution is achieved by using LANDesk Targeted Multicast™ technology, which uses a subnet rep as the host from which to download the software to all the selected devices in a subnet. During the auto discovery process devices will have been grouped into subnets. The core LANDesk Management server will send a packet to all devices in a subnet, and the one that provides the quickest response will be selected to act as the subnet rep, or administrators can select a specific computer to function as the subnet rep.

The software is then downloaded to the subnet rep, which initialises a local distribution using multicasting. If the subnet rep disappears, then another device in the subnet takes over the role of subnet rep. As the process takes place in the background the user may never be aware that a download is taking place. Because HTTP is used, which uses a byte download, if the user disconnects before the download has completed, the download will continue from where it left off the next time the user connects to the network.

Another useful feature is LANDesk Peer Download™ technology. If a device requires a software download, LANDesk Management Suite 8 agents on that device will first examine the other devices in the subnet, to see if any already have the required software. If there is a machine with the appropriate software then it will act as the host from which the software will be downloaded to the other device.

The maximum amount of bandwidth to be utilised can be controlled through bandwidth throttling. This provides support for mobile users or those connected through a slow link by detecting bandwidth that is not being used. When the user requires bandwidth, for example, to send an e-mail, the bandwidth used by the download is adjusted accordingly or even suspended to be resumed when the bandwidth becomes available again.

## Remote Control

The remote control feature is a potentially dangerous piece of functionality, and LANDesk Software has built in security measures. The system can be configured to allow end-users to specify whether they want their device to be remote controlled, before an administrator is allowed to perform this function. LANDesk Management Suite 8 is roles-based, with support for LDAP, which means that access to each feature including remote control can be restricted to particular users, who can be granted rights to manage specific machines. In addition, file transfers and remote executes are encrypted. Certificate-based security is also available.

A secure on-demand remote control implementation is also possible that only loads the remote control agent when an authenticated request is received at the device, and unloads the remote control agent automatically when the session ends.

## Reporting

Extensive reporting functionality is provided. The product is shipped with more than 50 pre-defined business reports. In addition a runtime version of Crystal Reports is provided. If users wish to create their own reports then the full version of Crystal Reports is required.

## LANDesk Patch Manager 8

This is a service that organisations subscribe to yearly, and provides vulnerability assessments to check where vulnerabilities are present and what patches are required. Organisations connect with the LANDesk Web site where the vulnerabilities that users have, which are detailed in the LANDesk Management Suite 8 database, are compared to the vulnerabilities and fixes that they should have. Options are then provided as to how the organisation wants to download, distribute, and install the required patches.

## Product Emphasis

As IT budgets are increasingly restricted, administrators are required to manage more with less, and the desktop is no exception. This is resulting in delays in installing software upgrades, and resolving problems logged with the help desk. With increasing workloads it is hardly surprising that many IT Managers are unaware of the IT hardware and software assets they have.

With its ability to provide the complete remote management of the desktop, LANDesk Management Suite 8 enables organisations to deploy their IT staff more efficiently and effectively, resolve issues faster, and reduce licensing costs by ensuring that redundant licences are not renewed.

## ► DEPLOYMENT

LANDesk Management Suite 8 runs on Windows Server 2003 or Windows 2000 servers. The Suite supports most versions of Windows, Macintosh, UNIX, Linux, and NetWare platforms. The data repository can be either Oracle or SQL Server, and it is shipped with a runtime version of Microsoft MSDE, with a schema provided on CD. There is also a Wizard provided to help users develop a schema if they prefer to use an existing database.

Although an organisation could implement the solution on its own, in the majority of cases this task will be undertaken by LANDesk trained Expert Solution Providers (ESPs), which is the approach preferred by LANDesk Software. These ESPs have technical consulting, implementation, and support skills to architect and deploy the solution.

LANDesk Management Suite 8 is not an out-of-the-box solution. All of the skills required for an implementation can be provided by the ESP. The ESP also provides training to customers to enable them to manage the system. Implementation time varies on the extent and complexity of the infrastructure of the customer but generally varies from weeks for small deployments to months for the largest implementations.

LANDesk Management Suite 8 can be deployed using a modular approach. Typically the first task that would be undertaken by an organisation would be auto discovery to check that the assets they actually have match those that they believe they should have. Once an inventory has been created the organisation is then in a position to decide what assets need to be managed.

Licences are charged on a per node basis, with a node being a managed PC or a managed server. Consoles and required services running on servers are not charged for. Support is charged at 18% of the licence fee and includes free upgrades.

All of the optional modules require LANDesk Management Suite 8 to be installed except the Instant Support Suite, which can be used as a stand-alone product. This is sold on a concurrent console licence basis: for two people working on a helpdesk and running the Instant Support Suite console, two licences would be required regardless of the number of users each helpdesk support person dealt with.

Potential risks that might cause the project to fail, LANDesk Software believes, are centred around a poor implementation by non-technical staff. Butler Group certainly feels that before any software can be implemented an organisation should know exactly what its objectives are in deploying the solution. In the case of LANDesk Management Suite 8 this should include an idea of the extent of the assets to be managed, and also the devices to be managed by each administrator.

LANDesk Software claims that payback is possible in 76.2 days, based on proven deployments and that the average ROI over three years is 1,051%. Butler Group regards these to be pretty impressive figures, but cautions that ROI is always difficult to calculate particularly with this type of product.

## ► PRODUCT STRATEGY

LANDesk Software does not target any particular size or market vertical for LANDesk Management Suite 8, but believes that any company with desktop devices can benefit from this solution. LANDesk's customers currently range from a 10 PC user implementation up to a 100,000 PC environment, although in the EMEA region the majority of customers are in the 500-1,500 PC range.

LANDesk Software sees its key market opportunity coming from a requirement of companies for efficient and effective management of IT resources, particularly in regard to keeping application and operating system software up-to-date.

Butler Group believes that a huge market opportunity for LANDesk Software will come from the push towards utility-based computing as IT evolves from a cost centre to a value centre. As this occurs and IT is expected to deliver specific Service Levels, it will no longer be acceptable to resolve desktop problems or software downloads in days or even hours, users will expect to have the tools they need for their job on demand. IT will also need to monitor software usage to ensure that individual departments are paying for the resources they are using. In order to provide the level of service that will be demanded by budget holders, IT will require products such as LANDesk Management Suite 8 to effectively manage and control the desktop, and deliver SLAs.

The route to market is through partners including resellers, systems integrators, and OEMs. As already discussed, the ESPs are comprehensively trained by LANDesk Software to ensure that they are able to offer customers full training and information about the most effective practices for product implementation and usage. LANDesk software believes that its solution should be implemented to solve a business problem, rather than for technology's sake.

Key business partnerships include ISVs such as Blue Ocean, Front Range, PeopleSoft, Remedy, Symantec, Touchpaper, and XcelleNet; systems integrators such as, ACS, Convergsys, IBM, Northrop Grumman, Siemens, and Unisys; and OEM partners such as Acer, Clear Cube, Gateway, FIC, Hitachi, Intel, NEC, TongFang, Toshiba, and Wincor Nixdorf.

LANDesk Software has one major release and one interim release each year. The company has a formal process in place to ensure that it keeps abreast of which enhancements customers desire. LANDesk Software is able to react very quickly to individual customer demands and changes as it now follows the Xtreme programming method rather than using the more traditional waterfall programming methodology. This new approach to programming allows engineers a lot more freedom and flexibility, and ensures that all projects are integrated, rather than separate entities. This in turn ensures that new features are all tightly integrated, and do not overlap or compromise each other.

## ► COMPANY PROFILE

LANDesk Software was originally the offering of LAN Systems created in 1985, 19 years ago. LAN Systems was acquired by Intel in 1991 and the LANDesk product performed well for the company over the next 11 years. Despite this, LANDesk was not a good fit for Intel's business model and after much discussion Intel formally decided to spin LANDesk off. LANDesk Software became a company in its own right on 18 September 2002 and the 90-day transition period ended on 18 December 2002. The new company is called LANDesk Software Inc. and it has its headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah in the US. The company also has another office in the US as well as offices in the UK, Europe, Ireland, Japan, Brazil, China, and Mexico.

LANDesk Software is owned by four groups of people. The investor with the largest stake in the company is Vector Capital, a large venture capital firm based in San Francisco. The other investors are vSpring (a smaller venture capital company), Intel's Capital Division, and LANDesk Software employees.

The company now employs in the region of 300 people in 18 countries with more than 4,000 specialised LANDesk software specialists providing sales and services. LANDesk Software products are localised in eight languages, which are: English, French, German, Italian, Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Japanese. As the company is privately run financial figures are not available, although LANDesk is able to claim 14 continuous profitable quarters.

LANDesk has shipped more than 250 million nodes of management software to over 15,000 installations worldwide. Customers include the European Commission, Prada, Bayer, Coca Cola, University Hospital Birmingham, Yahoo!, Louvre Museum, and BT Wholesale.

## ► SUMMARY

LANDesk Management Suite 8 provides organisations with the tools they require to effectively and efficiently manage increasingly distributed desktops. At first glance it may appear that LANDesk Software competes with the large framework vendors, but this is not the case. There are currently few players in this market space, and therefore the company is well positioned to exploit the growing demand for such management tools.

The emergence of utility computing should provide LANDesk Software with a good market opportunity within organisations where internal SLAs are a requirement, and individual departments demand an immediate resolution to requests or problems. Butler Group believes that any company with increasing numbers of desktops and other devices to manage should consider LANDesk Management Suite 8.

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