70% of IT Pros Cite "Consistent Data Across Systems and IT Depts." as Unified IT's #1 Benefit

Unified IT—what many consider to be the practice of having a unified experience across endpoint management, security, asset management, and enterprise service management—is an ambitious goal for an IT professional. However, with varying budgets, various initiatives, and reporting, this concept in 2020 still remains that: an ambitious goal.

This survey looked at the state of IT departments in 2020 and where their priorities fell. After surveying more than 1,300 IT professionals, it's clear vendor management and contract negotiation is becoming a time-consuming endeavor. In fact, 50% of IT professionals work with 11 or more vendors and nearly half (48%) spend weeks or months renegotiating their vendor contracts each year.

When describing a Unified IT experience across endpoint, security, asset, and enterprise service management, these words came up the most often:

While definitions of Unified IT vary, there is an ultimate goal: a unified approach to all the various departments that touch IT. We asked respondents what the top benefits of Unified IT were for their organization and here are the top five:

- 70% - consistent data across systems and IT departments
- 61% - improved user experience
- 60% - ease of use
- 59% - consistent processes/aligned processes across IT departments
- 58% - cost savings

If you don't know what you want, it's difficult to ask for or get it.

IT departments have many devices to track, secure, and manage, but surprisingly, our results showed that most IT professionals' confidence in doing all of these tasks remains about the same across endpoints, applications, and patching.

IT professionals' confidence in the discovery and inventory of:

- Endpoints
  - 63% are confident and extremely confident
  - 30% are just somewhat confident
  - Only 8% are not at all confident

- Software/applications
  - 59% are confident and extremely confident
  - 32% are just somewhat confident
  - Only 9% are not at all confident

IT professionals' confidence in their endpoints receiving and implementing appropriate security patches:

- 59% are confident and extremely confident
- 32% are just somewhat confident
- 8% are not at all confident

When it comes to managing and securing endpoints, we asked IT professionals whether they had a solution that does both; 59% reported yes and 41% said no.

When asked if getting a solution that can do both was important, IT professionals agreed it was indeed important:

- 49% said it was yes, very important
- 41% said somewhat important
- 10% no, not important

If you've ever been curious about WHY having such a solution would be useful, here's what respondents said:

Time well spent – or is it?

As an IT organization, professionals report working with many vendors. Shockingly, 50% reported working with more than 11! That's a lot of contracts – period. Here are the top three responses:

- 50% work with 11 + vendors
- 20% work with 5 - 7 vendors
- 16% work with 8 -10 vendors

This causes IT professionals to spend hours renegotiating contracts with their IT vendors. But it definitely varies by case! This study found nearly half (48%) spend weeks, or months, renegotiating their contracts. Here's the complete breakdown:

- 19% spend hours
- 33% spend days
- 35% spend weeks
- 13% spend months
- Reporting is also a time drain. Over a typical month, 94% of IT professionals reported spending hours, days, even weeks trying to produce IT operations reports:
- 52% hours
- 22% days
- 20% minutes
- 6% weeks

Sharing data

When looking across an IT portfolio (endpoint, security, service, and asset management) IT professionals are sharing data a number of ways, although 16% report not sharing their data at all. The top three ways to share include:

- 42% - Data is accessible via a shared workspace/portal
- 22% - Data sharing is already scheduled through IT systems automatically
- 14% - Shared data extracts

When it comes to improving visibility in an IT environment, professionals are using the following resources:

- 65% - endpoint management solution
- 48% - inventory tool(s)
- 45% - reporting tools
- 40% - spreadsheets
- 15% - using an ITAM solution

Environments are changing

We've all experienced a change in working environments, especially given the last few months, but this has been especially true for IT professionals. We asked respondents how much of their IT environment is on-premise vs. in the cloud:

- 44% reported having more on-prem than in the cloud
- A quarter (25%) reported having 50% on-prem and 50% in the cloud
- 14% are 100% on-prem
- 12% are more in cloud than on-prem
- 5% are 100% in the cloud

Budgeting for on-prem and cloud resources is a close reflection of the hybrid usage, with the following budget breakdowns:

- 43% of budget is more on-prem than in cloud
- 23% was spent on 50% on-prem and 50% in cloud
- 16% was more in cloud than on-prem
- 13% said their budget was spent 100% on on-prem
- 5% of budget was spent on 100% in cloud

Balancing initiatives

There are many initiatives IT professionals are trying to balance. Here are the ones most top of mind:

- 62% - improved patching and security
- 61% - cutting down time to resolve incidents, patch systems, etc.
- 47% - improved IT reporting
- 39% - unifying IT
- 30% - IT governance

If unified IT was not part of a professional's strategy, we asked what the reason was. Not surprisingly, the number one reason was budget!

- 34% - budget
- 13% - know how
- 12% - process
- 11% - executive support
- 9% - security

When it comes to dedicated budget for unifying IT, professionals are seeing different things in their various organizations:

1. 46% reported it coming out of existing budget
2. 37% reported not having any budget for this initiative
3. And 18% reported having dedicated budget for it

Conclusion

IT professionals are interested in having a unified IT experience, but not all of them have the budgets and resources to make it a reality. The findings also show there is a need for a more unified IT experience to help them do their jobs more efficiently and help them to better manage and secure their workplaces. However, with initiatives hyper-focused on security, issue-resolution time, and IT reporting, many may find that unifying their approach to IT will help them achieve all of these priorities going into 2021.

About the research

The survey polled more than 1,300 IT professionals. Research was generated by Ivanti in February/March of 2020.

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