



White Paper

Shadow IT: The Great IT Opportunity



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
The Rise of Shadow IT.....	3
Business Risk.....	4
IT Investment.....	4
One Size Does Not Fit All.....	4
High Security Environments.....	4
Regulated Compliance Environments.....	5
Balanced Environments.....	5
Free Environments.....	5
The Key to Shadow IT Is Focusing on Users, Not Their Devices.....	5
User-Oriented IT—How LANDESK Can Help.....	5
See and Manage Users Differently.....	6
Make BYOD a Success for Users and IT.....	6
Demonstrate the Value of IT Efficiencies.....	6
Avoid Surprises – Make IT Predictable and Dependable.....	7
Conclusion.....	7
References.....	8

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Introduction

The relentless march of consumer technologies such as smartphones, tablets, and cloud apps has changed attitudes and behavior of users, raising expectations of what people can access instantly out of the workplace.

Comfortable with the efficiency and ease of use of these technologies, employees inevitably come to expect more of the same in their work environment. Users expect organizations to make use of technology that offers both the greatest convenience and an enriched experience to maximize productivity for their employees.

If that service expectation is not met, if IT isn't providing the technologies quickly enough, or if employees prefer different technologies than those provided, there is a risk to the business of employees looking elsewhere for solutions to help get their work done. Organizations are also exposed to security breaches, data loss, and non-compliance when the business uses technologies outside of IT.

Manifesting under different names—Shadow IT, Rogue IT, Stealth IT—the unbounded use of technologies in the workplace is not a new issue. Yet with the introduction of mobile technology and cloud services, this unbounded use if left unmanaged is now more disruptive on a broader scale than in the past.

Embracing Shadow IT can present opportunities for IT organizations that are willing to review and guide this phenomenon rather than deny its existence or attempt to lock down their IT environments in the traditional command-and-control style.

The Rise of Shadow IT

Shadow IT encompasses applications, cloud services, devices, data, and even IT skills that are being used within organizations outside of the IT department. These days Shadow IT isn't limited to the activities of individual employees but is often sanctioned by department heads such as the head of a sales team who has a different set of objectives and deadlines. This sales manager may also lack trust in corporate IT's ability to meet his objectives. T

Consider for example the use of Dropbox, which many employee teams use to share data internally and externally. In the case of a sales team, sharing presentations or multi-media material with customers is common. These department heads will take the path of least resistance to obtain the tools they need to meet their objectives. They don't consider that what they're doing may be against corporate policy; instead they see it simply as a way to get their job done quickly.

This was highlighted in a recent report by Gartner Inc. which suggests that what a CIO considers as Shadow IT might be viewed as legitimate spending by a business unit since the business unit leader considers Shadow IT as merely decentralized IT spending.¹

In other cases as revealed in a report by Frost and Sullivan, employees recognized the risks associated with using non-approved IT (in one instance SaaS solutions), but felt they were justified in doing so.²

The new workforce entering the workplace was raised on a diet of downloading or accessing services and apps as needed. Those workers arriving from workplaces that used different technology, and feel more comfortable with it, believe their productivity is hampered if they don't continue to use the same tools and are likely to fall into this mind-set of justified usage. Today these users of IT services are more empowered and more self-sufficient. They want independence, flexibility, and expect choice.

Whatever the reasons, unchecked Shadow IT can be disruptive for IT departments, the organization, and its employees.

Business Risk

■ Data Privacy and Security

Without the rigorous research that IT organizations undertake for new IT cloud vendors, employees or departments that go it alone may relinquish control of their data unknowingly. In addition, data that includes intellectual property is more vulnerable. What happens if the employee leaves and user names and passwords have not been accounted for?

■ Cost and Compliance

Shadow IT introduces the risk of non-compliant software licences where employees don't manage effectively what they sign up for and install on their machines. Moreover, many department heads sanction employee purchases that occur via expenses, increasing operating costs unnecessarily as multiple purchases are made at department level. Finally, employees are often unaware of industry regulations and how to comply with them, possibly placing their organization in a state of non-compliance when using outside software and services.

IT Investment

■ Integration

As with any IT investment, the greater use an organization derives from it the greater the ROI. Where isolated Shadow IT technologies are introduced, the lack of integration with the existing IT estate limits the ability to build on and leverage corporate IT purchases. The lack of integration can compound data silos and other problems as individuals use storage options that reduce information flow and the effectiveness of data analysis and reporting.

■ Resources

If the IT team is unaware of the full infrastructure in use and the skills needed to fuel business initiatives, resources and licensing will be directed to the wrong areas of the business.

The question for IT is how to manage Shadow IT from a practical perspective. If IT becomes a roadblock, workers will find a way around it. If control is loosened, how are service quality, data integrity, and security maintained?



One Size Does Not Fit All

To tackle Shadow IT effectively, the IT department requires a change of mind-set. Instead of viewing Shadow IT as a problem you must view it as an opportunity to draw closer to your end users and discover what employees need to be more productive. Of course, every organization is different and the answer is not a one size fits all approach.

High Security Environments

High security environments, such as government-run institutions where Shadow IT has serious legal and security implications, need to employ solutions that help lock down the environment by discovering devices and managing security violations. But even in these institutions, it's important to understand the services that help users boost productivity by monitoring service requests and also communicating to workers what services are safe and available for them to subscribe to.

Balanced Environments

We categorize a “balanced environment” as one in which IT engages with end users and supplies enough services to enable business productivity but also grasps why Shadow IT exists and has the flexibility to meet end users' needs. The key is to offer IT solutions in a managed environment that allow workers to be productive while accepting safe substitutes.

Free Environments

In these environments, IT acts as a business enabler, encouraging business users to choose their services, software, and hardware. As an enabler, IT's role shifts from a provider to a broker, an advisor, and a security and integration expert that partners with its business users. In this decentralized IT environment, services are managed but not typically funded by IT. The scale that an IT organization adapts will depend on the type, size, and culture of your organization. Choosing the right path to enable that flexibility is the key to success.

The Key to Shadow IT Is Focusing on Users, Not Their Devices

Some see Shadow IT as a major challenge. But it could be your next big opportunity. While this was quite a challenge in the past, today's technology—from software license management and service catalogs to reporting and mobile IT—is in place to assist you.

Some organizations have attempted to shine a light on Shadow IT with fragmented solutions such as managing mobile devices to combat BYOD, yet they haven't addressed the big picture needs of their workers sufficiently. For the most part Shadow IT is still a hindrance.

User-Oriented IT—How LANDESK Can Help

Today's users of IT services are more empowered and want to be more self-sufficient with the tools, applications, data, and services they need for the job. How you work with them either boosts user productivity and IT efficiency or introduces chaos. IT can use this opportunity to listen to their end users and determine what will help them be more productive.

Now is the time to consider User-Oriented IT solutions and services that enable the freedom workers crave without placing the business at risk.

LANDESK does just that—balancing user freedom with IT control and responsibility to maximize productivity for every user, with any device, anywhere. The needs and responsibilities of both the employee and IT are shifting to where users and IT collaborate to strike a balance of accountability and responsibility. IT becomes an enabler rather than a “command and control” barrier to productivity that supports innovation across your organization, enhances your role as a trusted technology advisor, and delivers the responsive tools people need to get business done.

LANDESK® Total User Management helps you manage, secure, support, and maximize productivity for every user, with any device, anywhere. It creates flexible, reliable IT service environments and allows for acceptable usage policies to enable workers to bring their own devices or choose their own devices, services, and more.

You can leverage comprehensive LANDESK management solutions that include all of the technology, licensing, expertise, and support you require to embrace a “Choose Your Own Anything” mind-set. Moreover, it can help IT to identify the technology trends workers are embracing to gain productivity and offer those services out to the wider employee base in a safe environment. Total User Management helps you transform your service desk into a flexible, self-service resource that delivers the expanded choice and responsive self-service experience your users expect—from integrated app downloads to a complete IT services catalog.

The Total User Management suite integrates proven LANDESK management solutions for Systems, Endpoint Security, Mobility, Data Analytics, Asset Lifecycle, Process, and IT Services. Together this suite provides management intelligence and management of multiple platforms and devices; delivers software, operating systems; and patches anywhere; safeguards and controls the user's environment and data on any device; and provides IT service management and support that incorporates self-service. No matter the mix of desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones employees use, IT can manage, secure, and support those employees, devices, and critical data anywhere. Users stay productive and IT's job becomes less complex.

See and Manage Users Differently

Adapting to the new realities of Shadow IT means seeing and managing your users differently. LANDESK Total User Management automates, integrates, and focuses management, security, and service management on maximizing user productivity. Integrating your service desk with IT operations is the first step in gaining end-to-end visibility of your business users, the processes they interact with, as well as your IT estate. This end-to-end management allows greater integration and process automation to accelerate service restoration when failures occur. At the same time, integration reduces silos between IT teams, improving team collaboration. The result is reduced user downtime—a key friction factor that drives users to search for solutions elsewhere.



By monitoring trends in technology adoption among your users and listening to what they need to be productive, you can improve user satisfaction by delivering the services users want and strengthen IT's partnership with users. Through IT self-service that incorporates a consistent user experience to fulfill all their IT needs—integrated app downloads, self-help knowledge base, integrated request process or fully automated IT service catalog and more—you enable easy user access to needed tools and information. You also fulfill the new-worker quest for greater independence and you manage the individual user rather than his or her devices.

Make BYOD a Success for Users and IT

Organizations can embrace BYOD and workers can choose their own devices with confidence. Total User Management maximizes worker productivity anywhere by allowing the user to choose which devices, apps, or platforms make them most productive, while providing integrated management, security, and services tools to dial-in the appropriate amount of IT control you expect over corporate data, resources, and infrastructure. This way you can continue to safeguard corporate and customer data across all devices through multiple layers of protection. What's more, the ability to embrace BYOD means you can leverage those employee investments in devices to gain productivity benefits without spending capital on all devices that users want to carry.

Demonstrate the Value of IT Efficiencies

Eliminate the “IT doesn't provide value” conversation that attempts to legitimize the actions of Shadow IT users by demonstrating how the time, money, and effort invested in IT drives the company's bottom line and increases productivity incrementally across the enterprise. LANDESK Total User Management helps reveal the value of IT in the boardroom through performance dashboards that aggregate your IT user management data into meaningful reports and intelligence accessed on any device. Not only can you show business value, adopting the integrated LANDESK approach minimizes the impact of IT issues on user productivity caused by systems outages, virus attacks, security intrusions, and change failures. In fact, an IDC study report states you can reduce user downtime by 65%.³

As you work to match your end user needs for services and applications within limited resources and distributed environments, LANDESK will help to ensure your IT costs don't spiral upward. For example, with patented peer-to-peer downloading technologies you can leverage your existing infrastructure to deliver applications, operating systems, and services that consume only 10% of the bandwidth that other methods would use.⁴

Avoid Surprises – Make IT Predictable and Dependable

A lack of trust and confidence in corporate IT will drive the business toward Shadow IT solutions. With LANDESK you can make your IT operation dependable and predictable, making the adoption of best practices such as ITIL service management processes easier. Setting, monitoring, and meeting service level expectations systematically goes a long way in boosting trust in IT by offering the support assurances that Shadow IT cannot.

LANDESK Total User Management delivers the transparency and visibility into IT activities and success to help you become a business enabler and work more closely with your business units. The suite enables you to spot vulnerabilities quickly and publish IT notifications, dashboards, reports, and other indicators that affect both user and IT productivity.

We realize you must still maintain essential control over your budgets, and with LANDESK Total User Management you can make IT spend more predictable. No matter how many devices each user carries, you only pay per user, so if you choose to embrace BYOD you can minimize the financial impact of the initial and ongoing IT costs. Moreover, as your users' needs and productivity drivers evolve, you can build on the LANDESK out-of-the-box configured service and support system and eliminate costly coding solutions.

Finally, using point solutions to combat Shadow IT without the holistic view engenders only a false sense of security and a management headache. In contrast, the ability to manage license compliance and software usage across your entire IT portfolio helps you not only avoid heavy fines and associated loss of reputation, but also reduces overspending through reclaiming unused software licenses.

LANDESK solutions enable IT to manage more users, access more services, offer more support channels, make users more self-reliant, and choose from more devices and platforms. In addition, administrators can choose where and how they want to manage their LANDESK solutions: on premise, in the cloud, or a hybrid approach.

Conclusion

The unbounded “shadow, rogue, stealth” use of technology in the workplace if left unmanaged is now more disruptive on a broader scale today than in the past with the introduction of mobile technology and cloud services. On the other hand, embracing this type of technology use can offer new opportunities to enterprises that are willing and equipped to channel or guide this phenomenon rather than deny its existence or attempt a “command and control lockdown” to their IT environments.

LANDESK can help you transform your traditional management, security, and IT Service Management disciplines into a more flexible, integrated, and user-oriented IT infrastructure that's designed for today's mobile, cloud-based, and service-driven world.

To learn how you can turn your greatest Shadow IT concerns and challenges into exciting new opportunities, contact a LANDESK representative today.

For more information, email us at sales@LANDESK.com or speak with a LANDESK product representative:

- In the U.S. call: 1.800.982.2130
- In Europe call: +44 (0) 1344 442100
- In APAC call: 1300 661 871

For specific country offices and contact information, visit www.LANDESK.com.



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1 Gartner IT Metrics: A Critical Evaluation of Decentralized IT Spending and Digital Enterprise Readiness, 25 June, 2013.

2 Frost and Sullivan; “The Hidden Truth Behind Shadow IT,” November 2013

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