Lakeside®

Support a Proactive IT Approach

Deliver Better Digital Employee Experience with Streamlined Service Operations

Employees today rely heavily on computing devices for work.

Whether communicating with customers, collaborating with colleagues, or working independently on projects, nearly all forms of productivity are filtered through desktops, laptops, smartphones, tablets, and even rugged handhelds.

And those devices are even more critical for a distributed workforce. Remote and hybrid employees depend on their devices as the sole means of connecting to people and essential resources from wherever they work.

So if and when a technology problem arises, it can have an immediate, serious impact on productivity and the overall business. Sluggish device performance, unreliable connectivity, crashing apps, or hardware glitches interrupt work, stifle collaboration, and prevent employees from completing projects on time — all of which slow the growth of enterprises, making them less agile, less competitive, and less profitable.

Previously, employees would be encouraged to contact their company's IT help desk or end-user computing team for assistance. But the traditional reactive, or "break/fix," model of addressing those types of device issues is no longer working. IT groups find it difficult to support a growing, increasingly diverse collection of employee devices, especially in the growing work-from-anywhere environments.

And mounting challenges for IT groups can mean more complicated support processes, higher support costs, and longer wait times for fixes.

It's not surprising, then, that employees are often reluctant to contact IT support and submit tickets. In fact, 40% of employees say they don't report issues, according to Lakeside Software's Digital Workplace Productivity Report. Some users try to ignore device problems, suffering through issues that drain productivity little by little.

Others resort to "shadow IT," attempting to fix problems on their own using solutions that are not authorized by corporate IT. Both approaches can lead to large-scale problems later and leave devices vulnerable to security threats.

That's why organizations need a new, proactive approach to supporting end-user computing. Instead of waiting for small issues to become large ones, IT teams need ways to monitor the health of devices, gain insight into user experiences, and take early action. Moreover, they need to automate processes, leveraging the most sophisticated artificial intelligence (AI) models, so they can continuously optimize devices and enhance the efficiency of support. By becoming proactive, IT can transform not only the delivery of services and the experience of users but also business outcomes.

Support a Proactive IT Approach

Shift Left to Streamline IT Service Operations

SECTION 1:

Limitations of Traditional, Reactive IT Support

The traditional, reactive model of IT support has several limitations that can result in poor end-user experiences, lost productivity,and high costs.

POOR VISIBILITY

IT groups can't fix what they don't know is broken. With traditional models, IT relies on users to alert them when something goes wrong. But if users don't submit tickets, IT lacks visibility into problems.

ONE-WAY COMMUNICATION

The traditional method of depending on users to submit support tickets is part of a bigger problem: Today's support tools are built on one-way communication, from the employee to the business. But support teams need ways to engage with employees and their devices, evaluating device health before problems arise.

INABILITY TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE

As IT attempts to quickly resolve issues, it must often work with limited information provided by users. A support team member might inadvertently provide a surface-level or temporary solution without having visibility into the root cause — a cause that could generate additional problems in the future. That limited information might also mean support team members miss the big picture: A software issue reported by a single user might be a sign of a larger configuration issue that will ultimately affect many others.

LIMITED REMOTE ACCESS

A reactive approach also complicates support for remote employees. In a distributed workforce, employees cannot simply walk down the hall and ask for help with a problematic device. Any devices that require hands-on support from IT will need to be shipped in, extending the downtime for the user and increasing costs.

Support challenges are compounded when IT groups are also working remotely. In addition to using screen sharing solutions and remote diagnostic tools, these IT groups can benefit from solutions that enable users to help themselves using AI-enabled technologies, with minimal to no IT intervention.

LACK OF SCALABILITY

Whether IT works remotely or from a convenient location on a corporate campus, the reactive model does not scale well. Configuring numerous individual devices and addressing individual issues as they arise require a significant amount of manual work. And as the number of devices grows, so does the amount of resources needed. The lack of scalability becomes painfully obvious if multiple users report an issue with conflicting software or if a buggy update triggers multiple tickets, overwhelming the support desk.

Organizations need ways to address the steady growth of devices as well as a sudden inundation of problems — without struggling to find and hire more skilled IT workers or stretching already tight budgets. Otherwise, the queue for help will lengthen and employee productivity will suffer.

INADEQUATE UNDERSTANDING OF END-USER EXPERIENCE

With the reactive approach, there is no easy way to truly understand user experiences. Surveys can be useful, but they provide only a partial view of what users actually experience — and they do not enable IT to correlate reported experiences with objective data from devices.

Support teams need ways to engage with employees and their devices, evaluating device health before problems arise.

Old vs. New

Technology is always changing. And as digital environments become increasingly complex and users demand more from devices, IT must adopt new solutions and strategies.

THEN vs. NOW

THEN	NOW
Focused on the functionality of hardware and software	Focus is on the impact hardware and software has on end-user experience
IT measured user experience through the network and data center	IT measures user experience directly from devices
Asset management that prioritized more inventory and what users might need	Asset intelligence that identifies what users actually need and use for more precise allocation
Relied heavily on Service Level Agreements (SLAs)	Creating Experience Level Agreements (XLAs)
Service desk waits for users to report problems before begining remediation	Service desk uses AI and automation to predict and even prevent IT issues

SECTION 2:

Establishing a Proactive Support Strategy

A multi-level proactive IT support strategy can address many of the deficiencies of the reactive, break/fix model. Combined with the right tools, enterprises can gain greater visibility and insight into potential problems, and take action before problems cause significant downtime. The right strategy will also enable IT to streamline operations through automation and ultimately transform both support and the user experience.

DATA

The foundation of a proactive support strategy is continuous data collection. IT needs to collect a full range of data from devices, moving beyond the one-way communication that is the foundation of so many support processes and tools. For example, visibility into what apps users are running can help IT determine whether any of those apps are maxing out device resources.

At the same time, IT needs to understand user behavior. Administrators require granular, objective data on how users interact with devices and what types of issues users experience — even if those issues do not rise to the level of a support ticket.

The best proactive support strategies collect data from across the enterprise, and even beyond, in an automated fashion. Incorporating data from devices and users beyond an IT team's enterprise can help provide a more accurate view of typical user experiences.

INSIGHT

To make sense of all that continuously collected data, IT needs tools that can generate real-time insights into the health of devices and the experiences of users. Through continuous analysis, IT can then identify potential issues before they turn into large-scale problems.

To streamline support, it also helps to gather all those insights in a single, centralized console. This provides visibility into all types of users and groups, as well as fast access to high-level assessments with the ability to quickly drill down into details.

Plus, today's sophisticated AI models can consume vastly more data than humans can process. By continuous collecting, processing, and analyzing data, AI-enabled tools can turn that massive amount of data into actionable insights. AI fed by endpoint data can help provide insights to make any IT team more proactive and effecient.

ACTION

For proactive support to be successful, insights must be actionable. For example, a team might discover a software conflict among several devices. Before IT can take action, however, the team needs to know exactly which users are affected, how the problem is affecting them, what is the root cause, and what are the best ways to fix it.

Administrators also need the means to take those required actions. If a software conflict that affects thousands of users is discovered, IT will need to patch, update, or reconfigure systems rapidly and at scale. If a user issue requires support from a help desk agent, IT systems must provide that agent with all relevant system information to speed up diagnostics.

AUTOMATION

Proactive support should incorporate capabilities for automating key support processes — from identifying issues to addressing them — without manual intervention. Intelligent automations and AI enables IT to find and remediate problems faster than if it was done manually. It also enables IT to provide support at scale — managing a growing number of devices and remediating more issues without having to continuously hire more staff members or increase IT costs.

Automating allows organizations to "shift left," giving users the ability to resolve low-level support issues that might have typically required Level 1 help desk support.
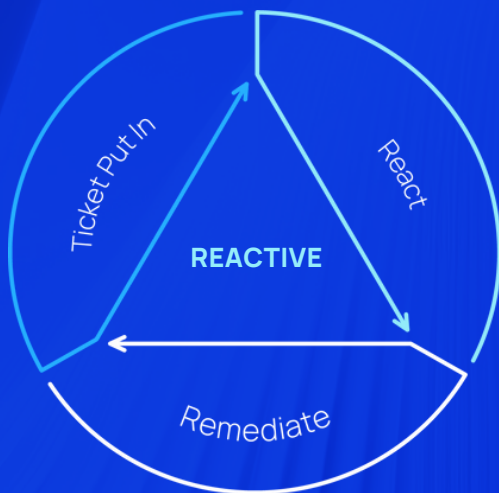
With users as a new "Level 0," all the tiers shift to the left, reserving the most highly skilled support technicians for more strategic projects that can help productivity and the overall business.

TRANSFORMATION

The best strategies help transform IT support and the user experience. Handling issues before they become full-blown crises and facilitating some self-service support will reduce burdens on IT teams. Proactively addressing issues will also improve uptime and eliminate many of the problems that can sap productivity. Greater insight can also help right-size devices, and match devices to specific user and application needs while avoiding unnecessary spending.

Differences in IT Approach

How service operations can start moving in the right direction

REACTIVE — Ticket Put In · React · Remediate

PROACTIVE — Data · Insight · Action · Automations & AI · Transform

- Forced to respond to service tickests or calls without a lot of details about the problems

- Working with limited data that doesnt show the whole picture

- Significant configuration and manual work required to investigate and solve problems

- Dependence on surveys to understand what users think about their experiences

- Lacks the depth of data needed to know what's happening on users' devices

- A new, underlying foundation that gathers deep data directly from devices

- Quickly understand the root cause of issues and how to fix them, as well as predict and prevent problems before they occur

- Proactively improve employees' digital experience through intelligent data analysis, AI, automation, and transformation

Defining Terms for Proactive Support

As you transition from reactive to proactive IT support, you might encounter a few new terms and concepts. Understanding their definitions can help you evaluate solutions and define what's possible.

Shift left: For organizations that offer tiered IT support, the goal of shifting left is to handle each level of incident on a lower support tier, freeing up highly skilled specialists for other tasks while also enabling users to address less-complex issues on their own.

Level 0 (L0): When organizations successfully shift left, they create a tier below level 1 — a "level 0" in which users can resolve some problems without IT assistance but using IT-sanctioned tools and processes.

Shadow IT: If users believe it will take too long or be too difficult to solve problems by submitting support tickets, they might resort to "shadow IT" — attempting to find and use technology fixes on their own, without the guidance or approval of IT.

Evergreen IT: Organizations increasingly strive for a more sustainable approach to IT, in which IT can continuously, and efficiently, deliver services even as user needs and technologies change.

AIOps: Stands for artificial Intelligence for IT operations, which uses analytics and machine learning to enable IT to aggregate, analyze, and act on massive amounts of data.

Self-healing: A self-healing help desk solves issues before users are affected through early detection, proactive intervention, predictive analysis, and automation. Creating a self-healing help desk should involve providing users with the right information and tools to fix some IT issues on their own.

Assisted healing: In many cases, you can prevent problems, resolve issues, and maintain policy compliance with minimal user participation. With assisted healing, you can remotely run an action on a user's system to address a reported problem.

Auto healing: The process of deploying patches, updates, or other fixes automatically, in the background, according to established group policies.

Mass healing: If you discover configuration issues or security vulnerabilities that might apply to numerous users, you can deploy patches and updates to thousands of devices all at once.

SECTION 3:

Implementing Proactive Support with SysTrack

Lakeside Software's SysTrack Platform can help your business rapidly transition from reactive to proactive support. With this cloud-based, AI-enabled solution, IT can continuously monitor user experiences and device performance, gain real-time insights, access capabilities for taking action, and automate key functions.

DATA COLLECTION

SysTrack helps you monitor the entirety of the end-user experience by collecting more than 10,000 data points every 15 seconds from each endpoint in your environment. This high frequency, high fidelity data includes a wide range of device metrics (CPU utilization, startup time, latency, events, and more) as well as user-specific details (such as application activity, prime user activity hours, and Active Directory details). The platform also collects that data from a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) environment in addition to devices both inside and outside the corporate network. SysTrack then integrates this real-time data with historical data, which can help pinpoint and address the root cause of IT issues faster and without end-user involvement. IT can also incorporate data collected from the wider community that includes enterprises beyond your own. This fully anonymized data can help teams spot emerging patterns and trends before they have a major impact on your organization.

Along with real-time and historical data, Lakeside's platform also integrates sentiment data provided through automated surveys that also enable users to submit tickets. Supplementing quantitative data with this kind of qualitative input from users can help IT better understand the impact of metrics on end-user experience.

Through its deep data collection and integration capabilities, SysTrack moves beyond the one-way communication of traditional tools. It constantly engages devices and users instead of waiting to be alerted to problems through ticket submissions.

Importantly, SysTrack does not collect sensitive information, such as the content of files or emails, keystrokes, intellectual property content, or any personal user information. The platform is fully compliant with strict data privacy regulations, including the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and ISO/IEC 27001 certified. Administrators can also disable or fine-tune tracking of certain data based on internal policies or additional, country-specific regulations.

A Lakeside Prevent dashboard showing the daily issues impacting end users, based on volume and severity.
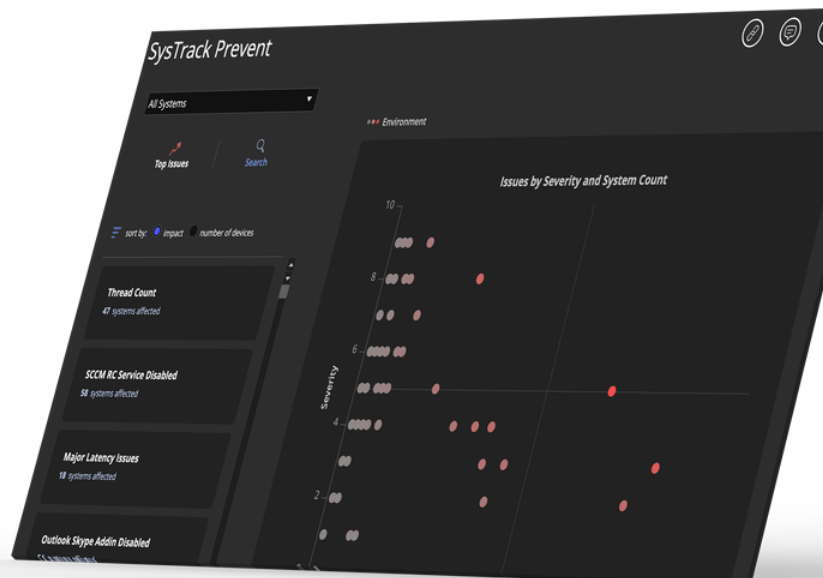
SysTrack

Give everyone a **BETTER VIEW**
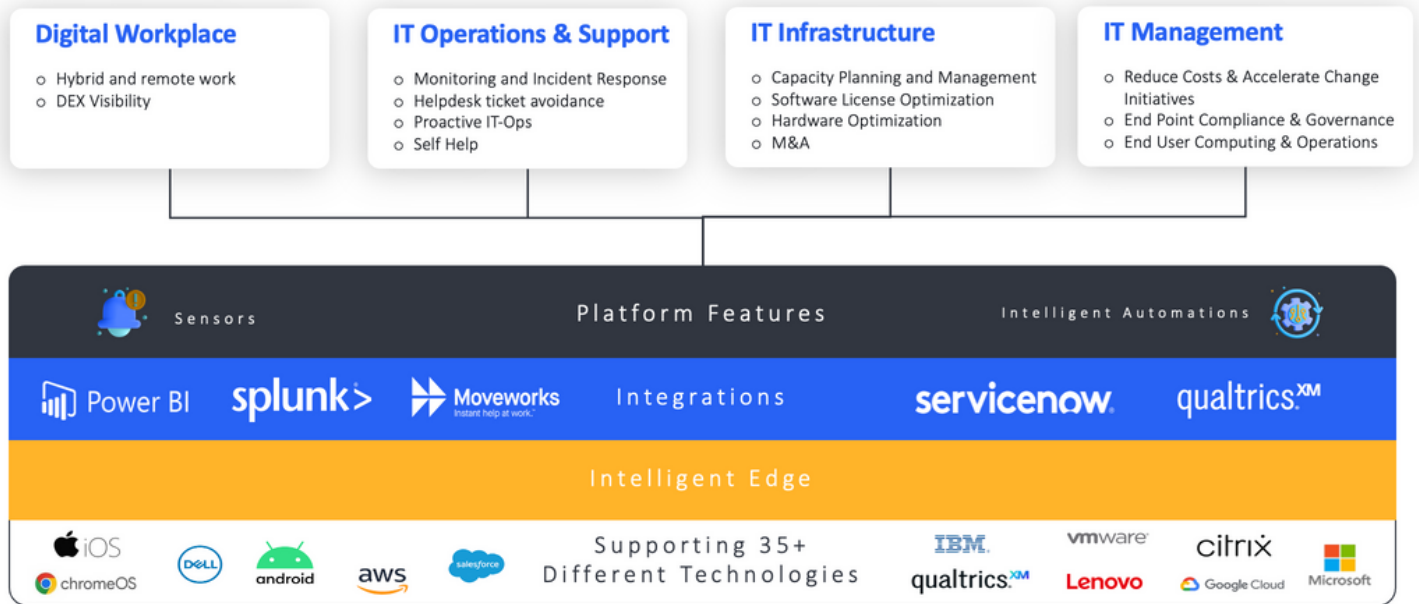
INSIGHT

SysTrack analyzes collected data and delivers extensive, easily visualized insights through simple- to-use tools and dashboards. Administrators can quickly assess everything from computer performance and boot time to application faults and security risks. Health scores offer fast, easy ways to understand user experiences and identify potential issues.

Apps within the platform can also help teams rapidly pinpoint the causes of reported issues. For example, IT professionals using Lakeside Assist, an all-in-one L1 service desk workspace, can learn that a reported application bug is impacting multiple users that do not have the latest updates. Or you might spot potential security vulnerabilities if devices lack required patches.

In addition, Lakeside's platform filter metrics according to customizable persona, role, and work style categories. Understanding how each type of user utilizes CPU, memory, disk, and networking then allows IT teams to better right-size devices according to users' actual needs.

By setting customized alarm and alert conditions, too, IT teams can be quickly notified about adverse conditions. Deep analysis, historical analysis, and advanced troubleshooting tools uncover root causes rapidly.

A SysTrack Visualizer dashboard showing the overall health of digital environments and end-user experiences.

ACTION

Built with proactive support in mind, SysTrack features multiple ways to take action based on data-driven insights while minimizing manual work. For example, it can:

- Use generative AI to notify employee of an issue using the tools they work in everyday, like Slack or Teams.

- Trigger an automated engagement process when device health falters, querying users about potential issues.

- Create self-help workflows and provide simple interactive tools that enable users to solve a number of common problems on their own.

- Remotely execute programs and scripts to solve problems.

- Remotely run assisted-healing scripts on user devices.

- Configure auto-healing routines that run automatically when a sensor is activated.

- Use mass healing to execute fixes across a group of systems that are experiencing the same problem.

ServiceNow customers can capitalize on integration between SysTrack and IT service management workflows. With Lakeside Assist for ITSM, each support ticket appends a snapshot of user device data along with computer identification and configuration information. ServiceNow agents can use all of that information to gain better context for support tickets, and accelerate incident resolution by identifying root causes with minimal or no user interaction.

AUTOMATION

Automation is vital for minimizing downtime and efficiently scaling support for a growing number and variety of user devices. Lakeside Prevent, a proactive services tool, employs automation for both identifying and remediating issues. For example, automated sensors continuously evaluate conditions and use artificial intelligence to detect anomalies, predict future issues, and analyze root causes. The intelligent sensors trigger alerts when action is needed — even before users begin to submit support tickets.

Lakeside's platform can then automatically undertake preset corrective actions, such as executing help desk scripts or employing mass-healing routines to avert problems and maintain user productivity.
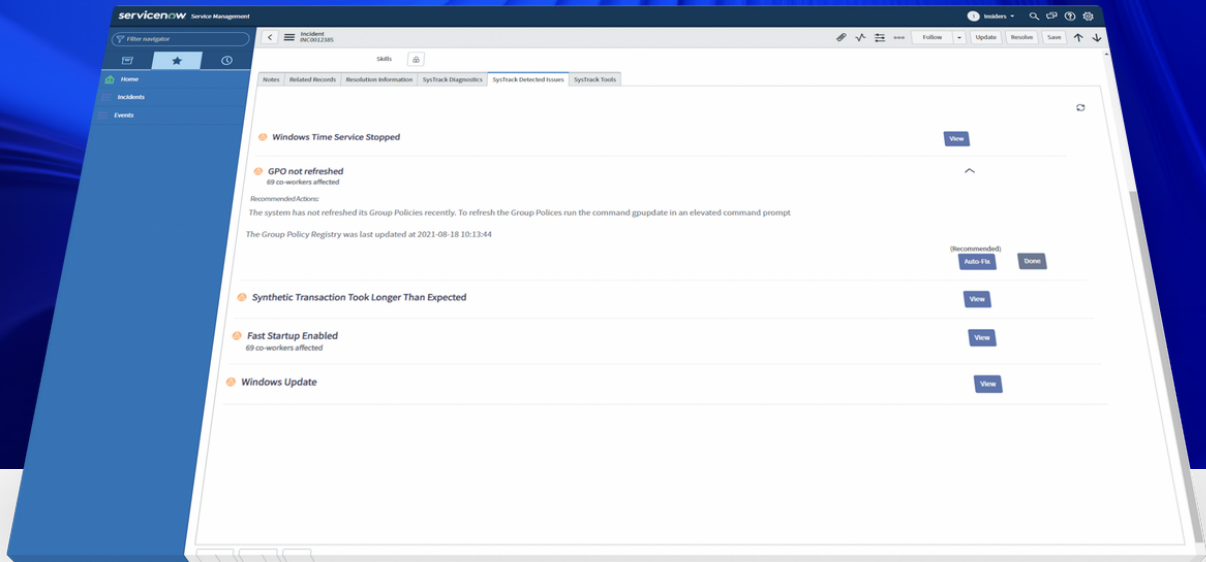
Lakeside Assist for ITSM, a Lakeside Software app for ServiceNow, uses endpoint intelligence to provide context — including device details, end-user experience scoring, critical sensors, and more — when a service desk ticket is filed.

SECTION 4:

Transforming Support and End-User Experiences

Adopting a proactive strategy, along with implementing the right tools, can help your organization transform IT support. Teams can identify issues sooner — before they cause large problems — and can remediate problems faster, minimizing downtime. Successfully shifting support to the left and establishing a L0 tier can also free up IT's most skilled team members for more strategic tasks and innovative IT projects. Meanwhile, the insights gained from continuous data collection will also enable IT to right-size your devices, better matching roles and groups with systems that meet their specific application and workflow needs.

Proactive IT support can also transform end-user experience by addressing potential issues before they impact users and helping to reduce disruptions. When everything works as it should, employees can concentrate on their job instead of their tools. Proactively eliminating technology issues also facilitates collaboration, which is the primary mode of working for many organizations.

In addition, proactive support promotes autonomy. Employees like to be empowered to solve technology problems on their own, without having to generate support tickets through the corporate help desk. Giving them tools and guidance for successfully addressing issues increases their sense of independence and self-confidence.

All of these benefits contribute to better business outcomes. When employees are able to use technology without disruptions, and they can fix small issues on their own, they will be better engaged, happier, and more productive. And that means better growth and a stronger competitve edge for enterprises.

Real Benefits for real-world problems

From banks and real estate firms to transportation and public sector agencies, organizations across industries are improving end-user computing experiences, streamlining help desk functions, and reducing costs by implementing proactive support with Lakeside Software. Here's an example case study:

LexisNexis, part of the multinational information and analytics company RELX, is widely known for providing powerful tools and solutions used by law firms across the globe. To keep digital experiences as seamless as possible for customers, however, Global IT Support Manager Greg Dolphin and his team turned to Lakeside Software's SysTrack platform to expand visibility across the digital environment, transform IT operations, and achieve better business outcomes.

Since 2020, Dolphin and his team have used SysTrack to track about 50 different metrics directly from endpoints to determine critical app performance, service reliability, the number of tickets generated by users, and, of course, customer sentiment to establish baselines and track overall digital experience.

By establishing XLAs and proactively addressing issues before they impact end users, LexisNexis has drastically improved customers' digital experiences and feedback. A year after deploying Lakeside's platform, about 5% of logged incidents across local IT support teams were filed proactively. Today, LexisNexis is able to solve 50% of issues proactively.

LexisNexis®

Epilogue

Employees increasingly rely on computing devices for nearly every aspect of their work. For many organizations, moving from a reactive to a proactive support model will be essential for minimizing downtime and delivering timely support, even as the number and variety of devices grow.

Lakeside Software can help facilitate that transition to proactive support. By implementing continuous monitoring, producing real-time insight, providing tools for taking action, and enabling automation, the solution can help you transform support and the end-user computing experience.

About Lakeside

Lakeside Software is how organizations with large, complex IT environments can finally get visibility across their entire digital estate and see how to do more with less. For far too long, IT teams have struggled to see what's going on in their dark estate — where costly inefficiencies, poor employee experiences, and unresolved problems hide. Only Lakeside lets you give everyone a better view, so they can see the hidden issues, see the smartest fixes, and see the biggest savings. That's why so many of the world's leading global brands rely on Lakeside. And it's how our customers see an average ROI of more than 250%. **Lakeside. Give everyone a better view.™**