

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a black and white vertically striped button-down shirt, stands in a server room. She has her hands raised in a gesturing motion, palms facing forward. In the background, there are server racks with glowing blue lights and computer monitors displaying data. In the foreground, the back of a person's head is visible, looking towards the woman. A blue rectangular overlay covers the bottom half of the image, containing the title and subtitle.

intel.

# The State of IT Ops

Rising to the Challenge

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## We've all seen the headlines and read the stories:

- *Remote Work Persisting and Trending Permanent* ([Gallup](#))
- *Remote Work: We Did It – Now What?* ([Forbes](#))
- *Hybrid work: What the office could look like now* ([BBC](#))

While the news has focused almost exclusively on the effect that remote and hybrid work has had, and is having, on end users, little has been said about the effect on the IT Ops teams who support them. Almost overnight, IT Ops had to meet the business technology needs of a work-from-home (WFH) workforce while going remote themselves.

While the past 18 months presented unprecedented change and challenges, for IT Ops, the results have been remarkably positive.

Intel® surveyed more than 200 IT Ops leaders in fall 2021 to find out what's working, what's not working, their biggest challenges, their changing role, and how they see the future.

## THIS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE SURVEY:

1

Among those surveyed, 63% of IT Ops leaders said they're still working remotely and 45% of their users are as well. Back in the office, things look quite different.

2

Executive management's view of IT Ops' role is more positive than it was 18 months ago. On the flip side, users' patience with technical support is waning.

3

Better at-home collaboration technology has pushed users' experience expectations higher. When they head back to the office, they also expect more from the conference room technology.

4

Remote fleet management pushed IT Ops to deploy new technologies and processes like virtual desktop solutions, better WFH collaboration tools, extended support, and remote new hire integration.

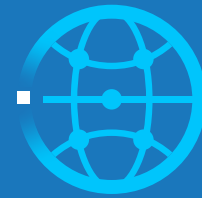
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When it comes to the IT Ops teams' own work experience, the team culture is better than 18 months ago, and process improvements have made their jobs easier for most.

Let's dive deeper on each of these.

# 1

## The workplace is every place



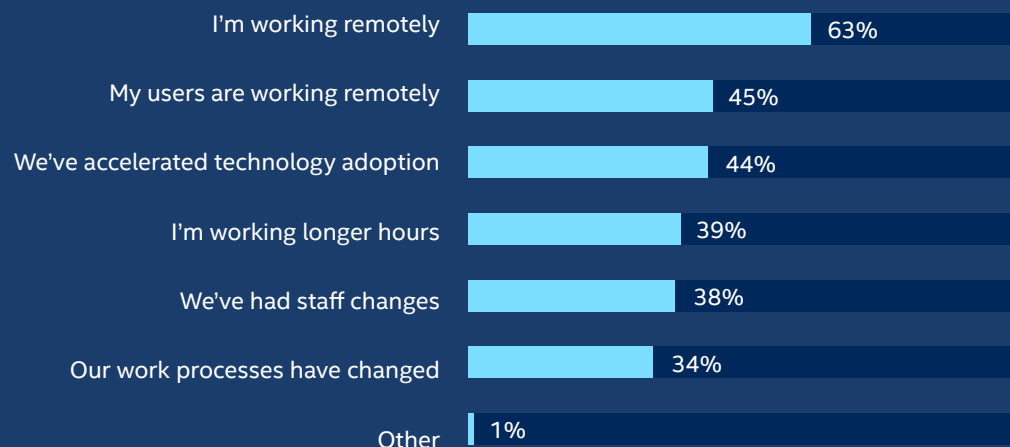
When we asked these IT Ops leaders how their jobs have changed in the past 18 months, it's no surprise that the top two responses revolved around working remotely. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (63%) said they're working remotely. They also told us that 45% of their users continue to work remotely, at least some of the time.

When it comes to supporting a remote workforce, respondents cited many challenges that remain. As one noted, "being able to provide support remotely at all stages of the business" can be difficult.

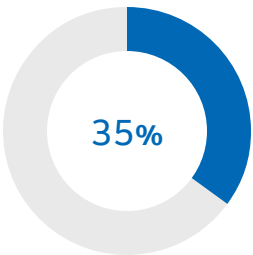
As workers return to the office, hybrid environments will be the norm for many enterprises. And that means more companies have implemented or are planning to implement shared workspaces.

Only one-third of survey respondents said workers will go back to using their existing offices. For the rest, 29% said workers will share offices and another 35% said they will have shared spaces with a reservation process. This means that fully two-thirds (64%) of those surveyed will have some shared office-type workspace. Supporting the shared offices will present its own challenges, for example, "having the desk space available for those who will use the reservation system."

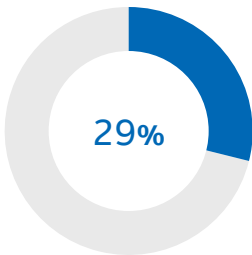
### In what ways has your job changed in the past 18 months?



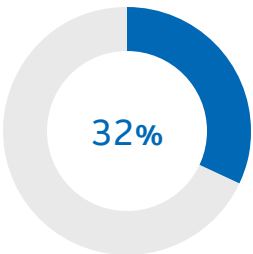
Have you implemented or are you planning to implement any new solution/process for shared/hybrid offices?



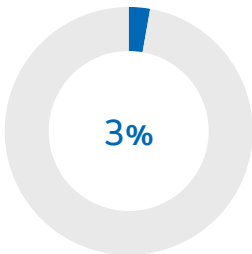
Yes,  
we are planning to  
deploy an office  
reservation system for  
shared workspaces



Yes,  
employees will  
share offices



No,  
employees will go  
back to using their  
existing offices



Other



63%

IT Ops staff  
working remotely

64%

of respondents  
have a shared-office  
strategy in place



# 2

## IT Ops' role has expanded but so have user expectations

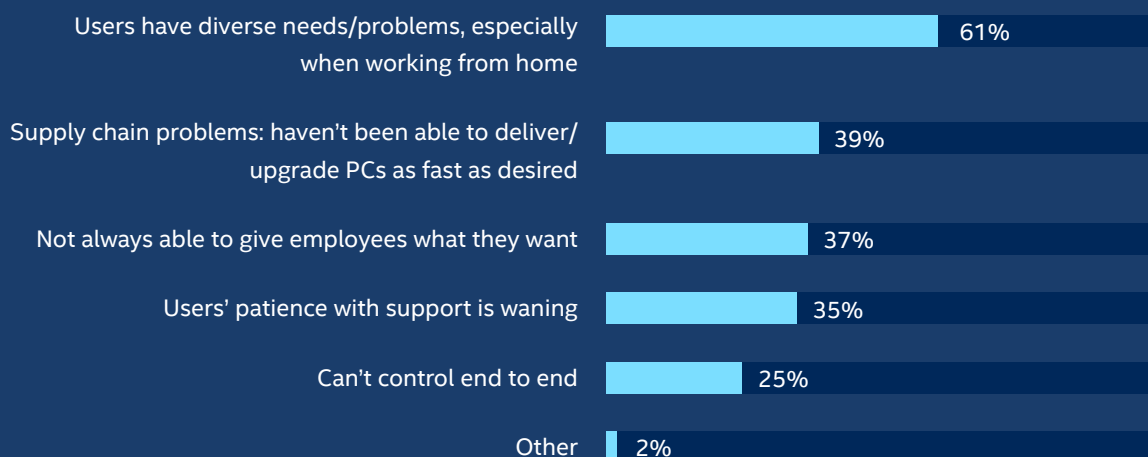
In 2020, when WFH became the norm for many workers almost overnight, IT Ops responded just as quickly, providing whatever support was needed to help users stay productive. An unforeseen consequence was that end users' support expectations rose. IT Ops teams have found themselves working longer hours, supporting a wider range of user needs, and dealing with waning user patience. As one respondent put it, "[A major challenge] is dealing with various attitudes and expectations from end users. They are getting difficult to work with due to their unreasonable expectations."

Nearly four in 10 survey respondents (39%) said they are working more hours and work-life balance has gotten harder. Fifty-nine percent said being available 24/7 is a challenge.

On the positive side, a majority of respondents noted that executive management's view of their role is more positive. In fact, 60% said management has a more positive view, with 38% saying it's slightly more positive and 22% saying it's significantly more positive. It appears the C-suite has a better appreciation of the importance of IT Ops in keeping the business running in the face of major disruptions.



### What are your biggest challenges in supporting user computing needs?





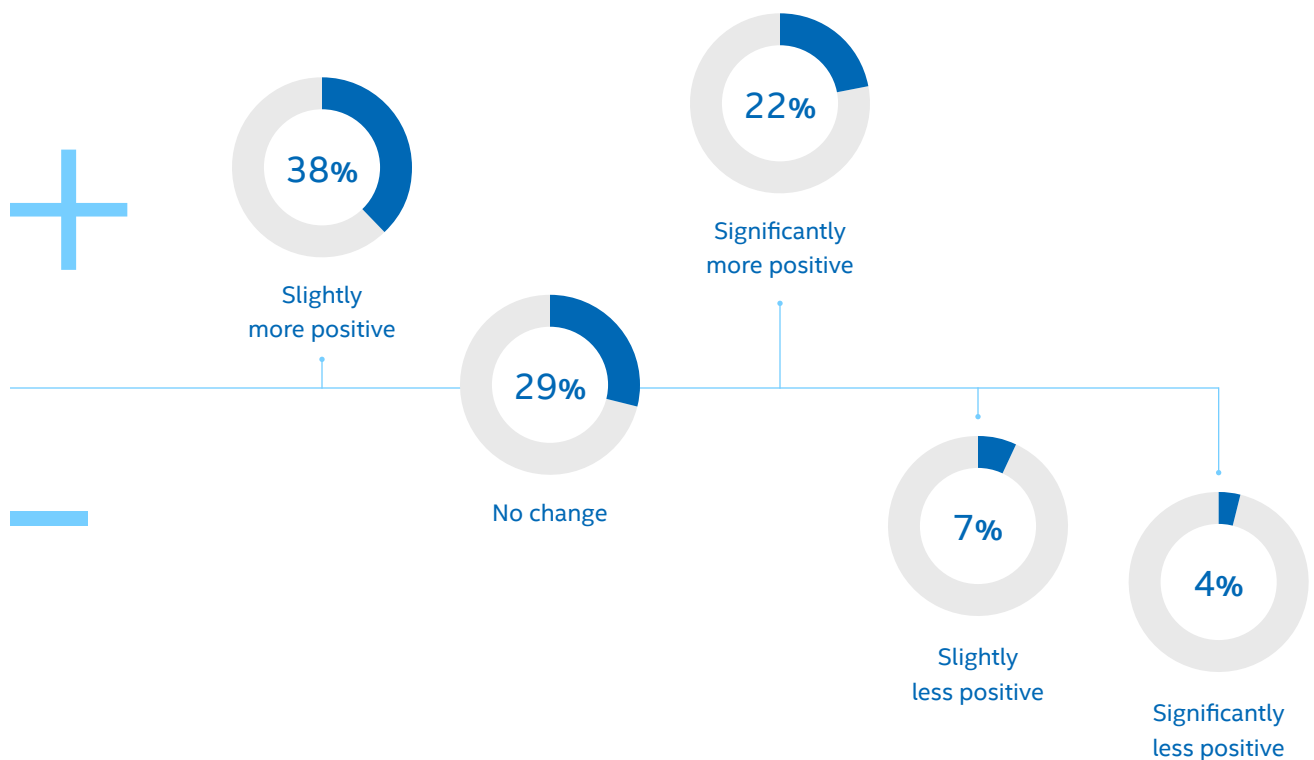
59%

IT Ops leaders say they must always be available

60%

believe management's view of their role is more positive now

How do you think your executive management's view of your role has changed?



# 3

## Technology needs have shifted

Users not only have higher expectations around technical support but also around the technology itself. And IT Ops recognized the need for better technology solutions as well. More than half of our survey respondents said their users need better solutions to connect and collaborate from home. PCs and peripherals need to support video conferencing with high-quality video and audio technology and reliable connections. This could mean better cameras, speakerphones, and monitors.

Once they're back in the office—habituated to a superior remote video conferencing experience—users expect that same kind of experience in the office meeting rooms that they had at home. The existing conference room collaboration technology may no longer be up to the task.

In response to these changing needs at home and in the office, IT Ops is accelerating technology adoption (44%) and providing better at-home tools (56%). But a hybrid workplace adds new hurdles.

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AS ONE IT OPS PRO PUT IT,

“ It is still challenging to manage the hybrid workspaces and so many teams. One solution does not fit all. ”

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Support teams have shifted their technology refresh cycles and processes to meet changing technology demands and to respond to supply chain disruptions. This may mean longer refresh cycles (35%), adding more OEMs for devices (22%), or putting upgrades on hold (19%).



Have you had to change your plans regarding refresh and support of new hires?

We continue to provide new devices to our new hires

38%

We sometimes need to provide older/used devices to new hires

35%

Refresh continues but at a lower rate than plans

35%

No, we continued to refresh on schedule

24%

We had to add more OEMs for devices

22%

Yes, refresh was put on hold because of availability of devices

19%

We switched from Intel/AMD only to a mix

6%



# 4

## IT Ops has adopted innovative solutions

Virtual desktops. Shared offices. Better collaboration tools. Remote new-hire integration.

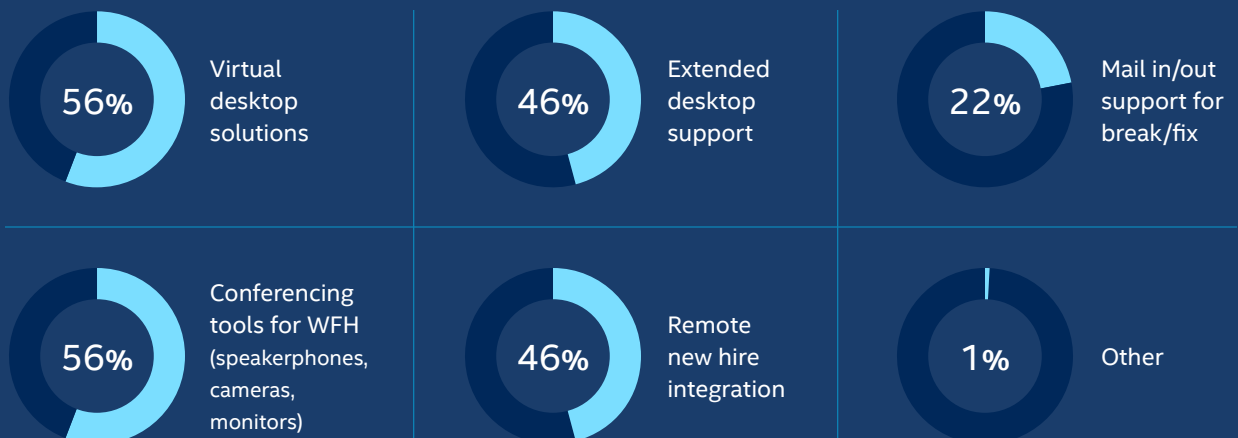
With all the changing technology needs and supply chain uncertainties, IT Ops leaders have turned to innovative solutions to serve their end users.

In a shared-office environment, workers will need to bring their business PCs with them when they go to the office or work from virtual desktops. Virtual desktops, where the entire user environment is stored remotely rather than on the user's device, give users the ability to access their virtual environment from any device, anywhere. It also allows IT Ops to manage users' devices remotely more easily. More than half of our survey respondents (56%) said they have deployed virtual desktops to overcome the challenges of remote fleet management and shared offices.

The same percentage (56%) said they're providing users with tools to improve the WFH video conferencing experience with tools such as speakerphones, cameras, and higher-quality monitors.

Other innovative solutions include extended desktop support, which allows IT Ops to have a desktop area spanning multiple displays. Nearly half (46%) have deployed this solution as well as remote new-hire integration.

Did you deploy any of the following technologies/processes to overcome the challenges you face?



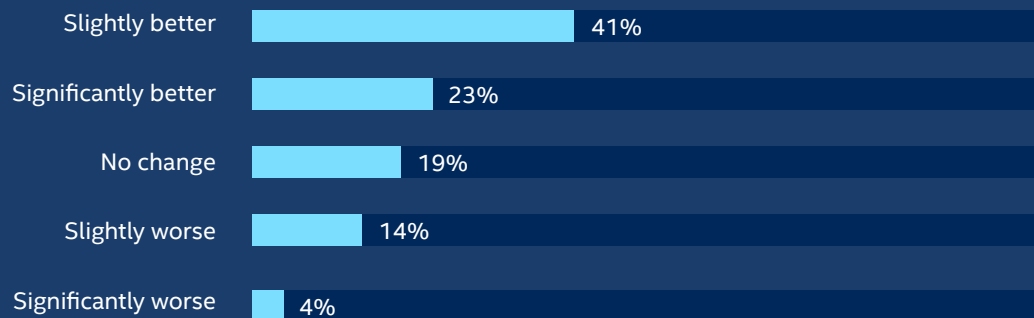
# 5

## Work is working better

Perhaps one of the most surprising findings from the survey is that more than half (54%) of IT Ops leaders said it's now easier to get work done. One in five (22%) said it's significantly easier and 32% said it's slightly easier. Two-thirds (64%) said the team culture is better than it was 18 months ago, and a whopping eight out of 10 (82%) said team collaboration is working well.

It appears that the flexibility of remote and hybrid work is a net positive to support teams.

### How much would you say the IT Ops team's culture has changed in the past 18 months?



In addition to IT Ops team members supporting each other, another

# 61%

said they have been able to manage their time well.

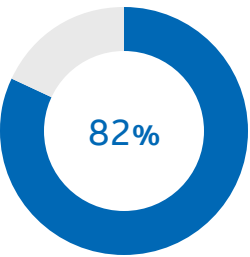


And despite many working remotely,

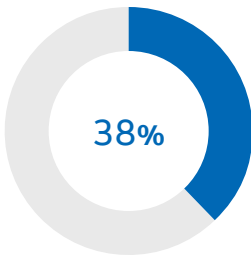
# 38%

said team building has been positive.

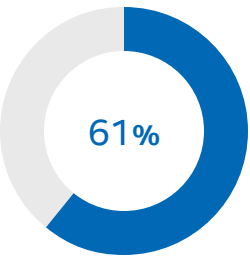
In terms of work processes, what's working well?



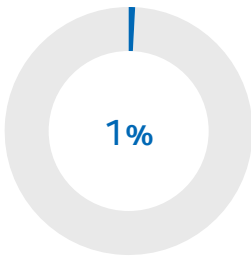
Collaboration among team members



Team building



Time management



Other

64% say the team culture is better than 18 months ago

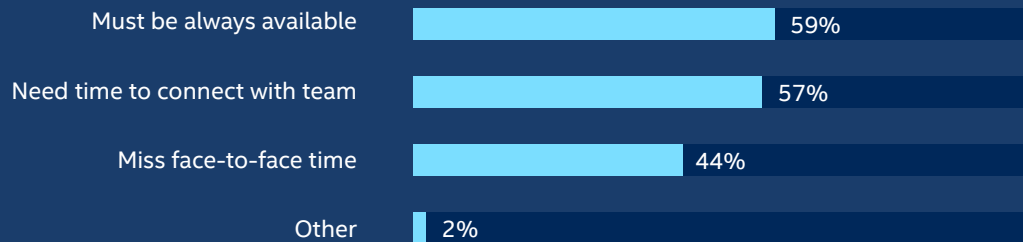
44% say it's easier now to get work done

82% of IT Ops leaders say team-member collaboration is good



## In terms of work processes, what needs improvement?

Of course, there are still challenges, and there's always room for improvement. Our respondents strongly believe (59%) that being always available is taxing. And 57% said they need more time to connect with team members. Not surprisingly, 44% also said they miss face-to-face time.



These dedicated leaders also expressed the desire to support their users even better.

AS ONE RESPONDENT NOTED,

“If I could make one change about my job, I would like to have more tutorials and more training modules to learn software that the company uses. Often, I feel that an employee must be very proactive and have a great deal of initiative to learn mostly on their own.”

One overwhelming conclusion is that both IT Ops teams and their end users appreciate a more flexible work environment. When asked about one change about their job they would make, a common response was “permanent work from home or flexible hours of working.”



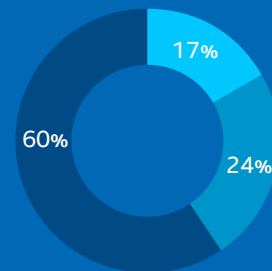
# IT Ops leaders have responded to the great workplace transformation

It's abundantly clear that 2020 and 2021 have been transformative years for enterprises in terms of how people work. Without the support of IT Ops, the transition to work-from-home and hybrid work would never have been possible. During that time, IT Ops leaders have faced many hurdles, but they've never lost sight of their goal to provide the best support possible to their end users. They have put in long hours and tapped into their creativity to find ways to keep employees as productive as possible working from home and back in the office. Innovative technology has been one key to this successful transition period and continues to play an important role.

Despite the unprecedented circumstances and the intense pressures, IT Ops leaders have not only overcome their biggest challenges, but they and their teams have emerged stronger than ever.

## METHODOLOGY

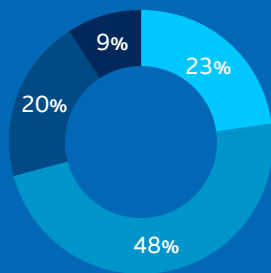
Intel surveyed 214 IT Ops leaders, director level and above, across the U.S. in October 2021. These leaders came from enterprises with \$500 million in annual revenue and up.



### Annual Revenue

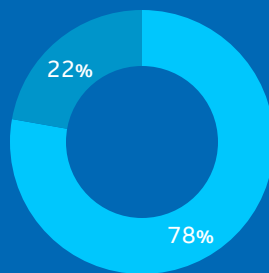
- \$500 – \$749 million
- \$750 – \$999 million
- \$1 billion+

## DEMOGRAPHICS



### Age

- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55–64



### Gender

- Male
- Female

## INDUSTRIES

Information technology/IT	40.29%
Healthcare	7.77%
Manufacturing	7.28%
Banking/financial	6.31%
Government/public sector	4.85%
Computer software	4.37%
Telecommunications	3.88%
Retail/wholesale trade	3.40%
Energy/utilities/oil and gas	2.91%
Engineering	2.91%
Insurance	2.91%



If you need more ideas about how to manage your technology fleet and support your end users in the hybrid workplace, [start here.](#)

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