

Playbook: PCL - Introduction

Introduction

In light of the recent Covid-19 virus, below are some considerations, some of which may be actioned now, but some are for planning for future (hopefully non-existent) events.

Certain aspects of this situation have led to working methods that were not previously considered necessary in some environments. The biggest for some will be the idea of working from home and this may be a large challenge. Being prepared though with a plan of action, should help streamline this effort.

Considerations

There are many considerations, some of which may already be too late to action, however many may still be put in place depending upon your current country's situation.

The allowance of working from home provides various challenges, which include:

- Are there relevant resources to allow users to take home, such that this is viable
- Do users need to access resources that are only accessible from the office, network shares for example
- How will devices be managed externally, where previously Firewalls, etc, may have prevented access
- Cross communication between teams or teachers and students

Options for consideration could include:

VPN

VPN is a great way to provide users an experience as if they were in the office, despite being offsite. This could allow for all of the above features, management, access to network shares, internal resources, etc.

External Device Management

For servers that have been designed to be only accessible internally, another option can be to provide Firewall rules, to allow devices to be managed when they are offsite, where a VPN is not in place. This relies on having an externally available server, such that devices can check-in, receive updates, etc. Since devices can only be configured to communicate with one server, the external name could be set to match internally and externally (Split Horizon DNS). However if the configuration is for an internal domain name, that may not be used externally, this will add to the complexity and additional changes will be required. Please see the KB on [port requirements](#).

Updates

Many updates, be that for the OS, Applications or otherwise, can be very large. Many users may not have adequate bandwidth to cope with this. Any pre-planning that can take place before devices leave the building would be beneficial. By the use of Fileset Association options, additional software could be pre-downloaded, which may not be required today, but if later is required, may then just have the state changed from downloaded to activated, reducing bandwidth requirements.

Bandwidth

Will the business bandwidth cope with requirements? Typically network usage considers the bulk of users being in-house. Take into account the amount of users that may be attempting to access internally stored data from outside the corporate network.

Controlling Devices

There are many tools for remote management to assist users, indeed FileWave has a built in tool for computers. Yet, with Apple's Catalina, some settings require the user self allow; force viewing a users screen is not an option.

Documentation

Have your users been provided an easy to view document or video to assist guiding them through the requirements of working from home, e.g how to use VPN, how to enable screen viewing for remote management, how to access file shares, etc. Additionally there is an external document that may be useful, to guide students and staff in to the experience of working from home:

<https://about.gitlab.com/company/culture/all-remote/remote-work-starter-guide/>

Classroom

Apple's Classroom App relies on proximity of devices; this is not a tool for working from home. What tools could be used instead?

Hardware Failure

If devices fail, how are users going to receive replacement hardware?

Device Purchasing

Has equipment been procured for future expectations, additional devices for users to be able to take home where it is impractical to take home office computers or for replacement spares. This is one that is possibly too late to action now in the light of Covid-19. As hardware manufacturing closures occur across the world, surplus device stock is being depleted. This is something that may have somewhat of an effect in the aftermath, until production lines are back in action and device shipping is resumed, with backlog of orders being fulfilled.

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