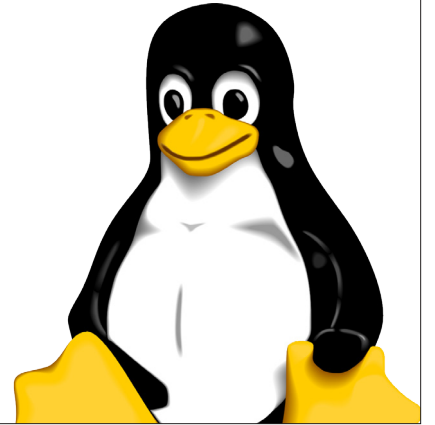


BOMGAR™



USING BOMGAR FOR LINUX SUPPORT

Using Bomgar for Linux Support

Challenges of Supporting Linux Remotely

Linux support has stayed in the background because Linux users are less likely to complain. A Linux server may only be accessible by a small group of IT administrators, and Linux workstations are likely to be run by software developers, network administrators, or other power-users who do more of their support themselves. Even though Linux remote control tools exist, their effectiveness is limited. There is still a great need to effectively support Linux on the server or for the power user. After all, if a user goes down, you may get a phone call, but if a server goes down, you may lose your job.

Although Linux has been in the background for some time, it isn't staying there. Recent user-friendly versions of Linux, such as Ubuntu and SUSE, have combined with netbooks and other devices. This new development is changing the landscape and increasing the need for Linux support at the desktop.

Unfortunately, most remote support products simply don't support Linux at all, and many of the ones that do don't work through firewalls. Thus far, if you needed remote support for Linux outside the company firewall, you've had to settle for patched-together solutions, awkward connection processes and limited functionality. In addition, solutions like VNC and SSH, which are often used for remote server access, are not centrally managed or monitored, leaving your corporation exposed to the risk of downtime or data breach. In order for Linux remote support to catch up, a few key areas need to be addressed.

Support through the Web

In today's business environment, users of all stripes are as likely to be around the world as at corporate headquarters. IT administrators require remote access to internal Linux servers from outside the office. Many Linux remote control tools do not work through the web, and others route sensitive data through a web-based provider. Working through the web without sacrificing security is crucial when supporting Linux workstations and distributed back-end servers.

Access Control

As important as remote access is to supporting your Linux workstations and infrastructure, maintaining security is even more important. The 2008 and 2009 Verizon Data Breach reports found that over 40% of data breaches could be traced back to improper use of remote access and remote control utilities¹. In an extended IT environment, controlling remote access across thousands of Linux systems can be quite a challenge. Even more challenging is being able to audit remote access once it has taken place to ensure that the support activity complied with industry regulations.

Automating Issue Resolution

Almost any task in Linux can be done with a script. So for a technician supporting Linux, only having access to the GUI can be a time-waster. A lot has been added to remote support tools over the years to help the technician solve the problem faster once connected to a Windows computer; unfortunately, all of those time-saving tips, tricks, scripts, and shortcuts fall flat outside the PC world. This forces the Linux technician to solve problems manually, wasting valuable cycles on routine tasks.

Linux and Windows

Supporting Linux may mean also supporting a Windows computer. This is especially the case if the Linux system in question is a server running applications for Windows nodes. Unfortunately, many remote control products support either Windows or Linux – but not both.

Escalation & Integration

Linux support is critical to your IT infrastructure, but it is still only part of the whole support picture. In order for your support center to offer Linux remote support in an efficient manner, it has to integrate tightly with other support systems and other IT groups.

If anything, this is even truer for Linux support than for Windows operating systems since the expertise required to fix a tricky Linux problem may be further back behind the front lines of support in the brain of a subject matter expert. However, most remote support tools are designed to connect only to the end user's system, not to other support reps, other groups, or other systems.

Conclusion

Linux has traditionally been used to run back-end servers or the desktops of technical power-users. However that picture is evolving with the advent of Ubuntu and netbooks. With the critical role Linux plays within your IT infrastructure, remote Linux support is a critical, but underserved, need for most support organizations.

Bomgar: A Secure Solution for Remote Linux Support

Bomgar officially supports multiple Linux distributions and works on dozens of others. And unlike some remote support solutions that stop with basic support, Bomgar offers largely the same functionality for Linux as it does for Windows. Bomgar's appliance-based deployment model ensures that sensitive system or user data stays securely within your company's control, and a web-enabled architecture means that you can support any Linux system anywhere without any configuration.



Web-Enabled Linux Remote Support

Bomgar works seamlessly through corporate firewalls without requiring a VPN or other configuration. Additionally, Bomgar sessions can be initiated in seconds without requiring pre-installed software. This means that you can be on the screen in seconds, even if this is your first time to connect to a Linux-based netbook on a WiFi hotspot around the world.



Cross-Platform Support

Bomgar enables the support rep to handle multiple sessions within a tabbed interface. This means that while connected to a Linux server in a back-end datacenter, the technician can also connect to a Windows laptop around the world and figure out why the two systems can't exchange data. Additionally, Bomgar supports Mac, Windows Mobile, and BlackBerry, so you can connect and support no matter what the operating system.



Centralized Security

Enterprise organizations like Novell in software and Zappos in retail use Bomgar to support their Linux customers, users, and infrastructure. Bomgar enables granular control over technician permissions through individual or group policies integrated with your own internal directory using LDAP, RADIUS, Kerberos, or other security providers. Beyond controlling access, Bomgar gives you the capability to record every session in video format so that you can audit every click and keystroke of every session, ensuring the integrity of system data. Bomgar's Embassy™ feature even enables you to create separate groups for vendor access, ensuring that both internal and external system access is centrally controlled and auditable.



Scripts & Tools

With Bomgar, you can create, organize, and catalogue any number of pre-built scripts. This enables your support center to automate routine diagnostics, troubleshooting, and remediation. Scripts can also reference a file for more robust tasks such as installing software. This functionality works on Linux as well as other platforms and can be shared across teams to ensure that every rep is using best-practices. In addition to scripts, Bomgar offers numerous shortcuts and tools (such as file transfer, reboot, system info, and command line) that speed and automate the process of Linux support.



Escalation & Integration

Bomgar's centralized, appliance-based model enables you to integrate Bomgar securely into your internal systems and integrate Linux support into your larger support systems and processes. Bomgar offers pre-built connectors to service desk management platforms from HP and BMC as well as a robust API and software development kit. Using these integration tools, you can keep all of your incident data in one place by associating Bomgar sessions with your incident IDs.



If a session needs to be escalated, the Bomgar rep can transfer or share the session with another rep or another team, enabling reps from all over the company to be on the same screen as the problem.

A Consolidated Solution

With a broad range of remote support solutions, the same solution you use to support Linux can be used in other parts of your organization as well. Bomgar offers remote support solutions for:

- Service Desk
- Customer Support
- Kiosk & POS Terminals
- Technical Training
- IT Infrastructure Support
- Vendor Access