Good to know
Helping you to access support needed by virtual or remote teams

Virtual team members may need to work with anyone, at any time, from anywhere to achieve common goals.

- Meet face-to-face rarely
- Probably not in the same building or country
- May work different shifts
- Rely on technology both for information flow and communication that fosters co-operation

The type of project the team is working on will determine the most appropriate combination of hardware and software. As team leader you need to make sure team members have access to these, as well as essential office furniture, wherever they will be working. You may need to budget for resources. Make sure that it is not likely to breakdown and need fixing remotely, and that it is useable on everyone's hardware. Also make sure everyone uses the same processes to prevent misunderstanding and maximise effectiveness.
Support remote or virtual teams

Tools and processes such as:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>What it is</th>
<th>What it does</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td>- Personal computers, tablets or mobile phones with communication links through a modem, the public telephone system or local area networks (LANs).</td>
<td>- Users are authenticated before they are allowed access to the LAN, usually by entering their user name and a unique password. This is a form of security to protect the local area network and its data.</td>
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<td>- Server</td>
<td>- Required to allow remote access and control permission levels.</td>
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<td>- If none, you could use a cloud computing service. With tools such as Dropbox you store files online. Authorised people can view them. Usually, both systems should be connected to the internet, and the IP address of the host/server system must be known.</td>
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<td>Software</td>
<td>- Electronic mail, various collaboration tools.</td>
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**SAMPLE**

Support remote or virtual teams
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Websites</th>
<th>Intranet</th>
<th>Virtual Private Network (VPN)</th>
<th>Virtual desktop</th>
<th>Virtual workplace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electronic documents linked logically.</td>
<td>A small internet inside an organisation.</td>
<td>Secure way to provide remote access.</td>
<td>A user’s work PC desktop (icons, windows, folders, toolbars, widgets) stored remotely on a server.</td>
<td>Collaboration technologies allow people to work together remotely.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stored on computer linked to the internet and made available through the world</td>
<td>Isolated from the internet by a firewall.</td>
<td>Information sent between the two computers is scrambled - cannot be intercepted.</td>
<td>Remote access to desktop from multiple devices (home PC, smart phone or tablet).</td>
<td>Enable virtual communications.</td>
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<td>Users navigate to find content.</td>
<td>Access controlled to the level of individual computer.</td>
<td>Connects home or field office via the internet.</td>
<td>Only need an Internet connection for remote working anywhere.</td>
<td>Manage virtual meetings.</td>
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<td>Everyone sees the same version of each page.</td>
<td>Users given access to it as well as most of, or entire, internet.</td>
<td>Can be complicated to set up so require the help of your IT specialists, and investment in appropriate hardware and software.</td>
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### Support remote or virtual teams

**Examples include:**
- Instant messaging, live chat.
- Meetings software.
- Teleconferencing or videoconferencing.
- Electronic whiteboards.
- Poll facility.
- Document editors.
- Calendars.
- Discussion threads.
- Document annotation.
- Storage facilities.

**Carry out virtual meetings/conferences.**
- People can see where others are pointing.
- Assess team member's opinions on issues under discussion.
- Track changes various team members have made.
- Joint scheduling.
- Conflict identification and resolution.
- To identify team member’s views; to manage version control and change.
- For sharing documents – can be organised by team’s processes or tasks to facilitate retrieval.
Remote Access

Decide what you want to use remote access for. You can then arrange the appropriate level of access to parts of your system such as email or more extensive file sharing by opening up areas and arranging for accepted users to log in and download files. Increasingly operating systems have remote access software already built in.

When the remote person connects to the host computer, a window showing the ‘desktop’ of the host usually appears. They may then control the host as if they are sitting in front of it. The remote user has access to all the files, shared drives and processes that they have been given permission to interact with. Allowing any level of remote access to your systems increases the security risk to your organisation and so you need to evaluate any potential threats and take action to keep your information safe.

Assuring safety

Be sure that your team members working remotely, as well as the equipment and your data, are safe. Make them aware of how to work safely at computer screens (http://www.safeworkers.co.uk/VDUsAndComputers.html).

- Good sitting position.
- No eyestrain.
- Adequate lighting.
- Frequent breaks.

- Protect from theft.
- Protect from electrical surges.

- Make sure team members are properly insured for working from home.
- Include in organisation insurance?

- Eavesdropping.
- Unauthorised access.
- Cyber threats.
- Back up critical documents.
- Decide on disposal of unwanted documents.

- Protect from theft.
- Protect from electrical surges.
Carry out a risk assessment together with your team:

1. Identify with your team potential areas of concern about safety, e.g., Cyberthreats.
2. How likely are they to happen?
3. What would be their potential impact?
4. Make and implement a plan to maintain safe working practices.
5. Review and update regularly.
Support remote or virtual teams

This will encourage safe practice amongst your virtual team members.

References