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STATE OF WORKPLACE TECHNOLOGY

Bloatware – The difference between love and hate for workplace tech

Europe

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IT Pros Want More of Less

"Bloatware" – unwanted software that's annoying or distracting – is a hidden and growing problem for businesses across the globe. Overly complicated software is not only hindering productivity, but also causing frustration among IT pros. They want more of less: less bloat; less waste; less complexity.

Legacy SaaS companies have overextended on making sure their technology ticks all the feature boxes on the CIO's list. Users are getting bogged down with add-ons, most of which go unused, which means they often hate the software they use all day long. Instead, IT teams want software that's easy, fast and just works. As software packages increase in complexity, user satisfaction decreases — and so does the time/cost benefit to companies.

To find out how bloated software affects businesses, Freshworks recently conducted a survey among over 2,000 IT professionals globally, including 900 respondents from European countries.

In the research, we explored their motivations and challenges with their tech stack — and uncovered some powerful insights.

European IT pros are wasting their days away.

88% say they waste time every week working with or supporting bloatware.

They're willing to give up vacations to make it stop.

38% would rather have better software than more PTO.

Globally, IT pros waste 7 hours per week on average dealing with bloatware.

Same in Europe, but in the U.S., IT pros waste 8 hours per week ($20k per year individually).

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Less Clutter, More Cleanliness
On average, European IT professionals say they have 15 different applications available for use on their work computer, but they're only using half of them. This kind of software clutter is undermining productivity and profitability.

Fix It, Why Bother?
Perhaps even more worrisome is that many IT workers are not speaking up, leaving bloatware to rage on. Seven in 10 (70%) IT workers have hesitations about voicing feedback on the software their company uses. Why?

22% don't want to be seen as a complainer.

21% say their company has a history of ignoring feedback.

18% don't believe they'll be listened to.

All In Favor of Easy, Say IT
Ease-of-use is the top consideration when making software decisions, with 57% of IT pros in Europe calling it a driving factor. Ease even beat out cost, which was only labeled a driving factor by 46% of respondents.

94% say that their company could benefit from reducing their overall software contracts.

66% say their company would benefit from replacing complex software with simpler software.

60% prefer a single software solution for IT service management rather than several.

The Massive Cost of Wasted Time
IT pros in Europe report that, on average, they could save 6 hours and 36 minutes of work per week by reducing bloatware — showcasing that the bloat problem is ubiquitous and burdensome. The majority (86%) say they waste time every week working with or supporting bloatware, and over two-thirds are wasting more than an hour per week.

The Trouble with Terrible Tech

50% say their organization pays for software their IT teams never use.

42% say their organization spends too much on its tech stack.

38% say too much of their tech stack is hard to use.

32% say their organization doesn't know how to stop paying for unnecessary services.

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Frustrating Software Hurts Motivation and Performance

Fifty-nine percent of IT pros in Europe say they hate using outdated legacy software that isn't easy to use. To make matters worse, some even feel their software decisions reflects how their company values them:

32% say that being forced to use outdated legacy software makes them want to quit their job.

35% say that they don't think their company cares about them when they make them use bad software.

Over 9 in 10 (91%) IT pros have frustrations with their company's software:

34% say it slows down their work.

29% say it lacks flexibility.

30% require multiple programs to do their job effectively.

Bloat Begets Burnout

The pandemic and remote work have elevated mental health to an everyday issue — especially in tech. Four in five (80%) European IT pros are burnt out and over a third (34%) say that they are the most burnt out they've ever been in their career. More than half (59%) say that their burnout impacts their initiative and motivation at work.

While burnt out IT staff report that today's software is often part of the problem, they also acknowledged that better software can be part of the solution:

48% say the software their company uses feels like it was made a decade or more ago

37% say that easier-to-use software would help reduce their burnout.

43% say that too much of their tech stack is hard to use.

37% say having software that reduces their workload would help reduce their burnout.

The main things an organization can do to help reduce burnout in IT pros?:
Provide better benefits — 42%
More vacation days — 41%
Provide easier to use software — 35%

Better Software over Better Benefits

For some, it's gotten so bad that they would even trade premium work perks for a simpler stack. We asked IT workers what benefits they would be willing to give up in exchange for better software.

39%
More Parental Leave

38%
More Vacation Days

33%
Fully Remote Work Option

30%
More Sick/Wellness Days

26%
Flexible Schedules

24%
A Four-day Work Week

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Methodology

Freshworks conducted this research using an online survey prepared by Method Research and distributed by RepData among n=2,001 adults ages 18+ that work full time as IT professionals, with n=500 U.S., n=500 U.K., and n=100 in each of the following ten countries: Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Singapore, Australia/NZ, Malaysia, India, United Arab Emirates, and South Africa.
The sample was balanced by gender, age, and company size, with an internationally representative geographic spread of respondents.
Data was collected from March 18 to April 9, 2022.

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