

Wireless Productivity

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With the need for mobile workers to have easy access to relevant data while traveling, often from place to place throughout a single day, wireless connectivity is gaining the attention of IT directors in many business arenas. A range of workers can benefit from the ease of wireless thin clients to make their jobs easier. Medical personnel seeking access to patient information as they travel from room to room throughout a hospital, delivery persons and service technicians traveling to customers' homes, and traveling executives all need a variety of information in real time. The rise of wireless thin clients is due in part to the prominence of Wireless Local Area Networks (WLANs), which are being deployed by organizations at a record pace. Synergy Research group reported that WLAN vendors recorded a \$1.8 billion sales figure in 2002 and the figure was expected to reach the \$2.8 billion mark in 2005.

Previously held misconceptions about wireless thin client technology are being dissolved, and IT departments are increasingly finding that wireless thin client networks may be the best way to support the trend from a static workforce to a more dynamic one. For example, despite a sometimes-held belief to the contrary, implementing a mobile thin client network can actually *lower* network infrastructure requirements rather than raise them. This is because, although data is constantly flowing over the network, the amount of data being transmitted during an average thin client session is only about 56KB per second, a relatively small amount.

In addition, though mobile thin client networks require more powerful servers, this cost is only a fraction of the total cost of the application. In the end, the total cost of mobile thin client networks versus traditional network environments is about the same.

Portable thin clients are quickly becoming the most common device carried by executives and other mobile workers. While e-mail is the most common application accessed by wireless end users, it is expected that enterprise mobility will continue to include other applications, such as sales automation and field service applications, as well as point of service data entry and retrieval. To this end, wireless technology is quickly becoming more than an “extra” but rather an integral part of IT networking. Even as enterprise mobility continues its steady growth in the second part of the current decade, it is still only in the earliest phase of development, pointing to a host of possibilities for the future. In the past, mobile solutions were used primarily by a certain set of vertical markets. Now, as wireless technology ripens and becomes more scalable, more and more enterprises can take advantage of the power and productivity it affords.

In field service and sales, for example, wireless mobility can enhance back-office customer service functions such as order entry, billing, routing, and activity tracking. Several solutions exist for healthcare providers as well. One possibility is a wireless infrastructure such as a wireless LAN (WLAN/Wi-fi) and/or wireless wide area network (WWAN) incorporating cellular technology (CDMA, GSM, and GPRS). Alternatively, the use of wireless portable devices such as PDAs, laptops, tablet PCs,

or wireless thin clients may effectively meet the needs of healthcare providers. In addition, a growing trend for healthcare organizations is session mobility, which can leverage any wireless device and infrastructure. When fully integrated, session mobility enables healthcare providers to access critical server-based information at the point of care. Users can begin a session at one location, suspend it, and then access the session from another location without losing data or compromising security.

Wireless mobility is also gaining prevalence in government agencies for a variety of initiatives. These may include improving item-level tracking standards of items that enter the country and alignment of security with commerce. With regard to public safety initiatives, wireless mobility enables governments to shift toward interactive systems through which transactions can be processed at the point of activity. By equipping government workers with wireless devices, security portals can be accessed as needed and data can be retrieved in real time.

Simply put, wireless technology gives organizations a real competitive advantage. Field technicians can have access to customer information, such as repair history, in real time, and companies can keep track of exactly where all of their technicians are at any given time. Package deliveries can be registered as they happen, saving personnel time they would previously have needed to spend entering data manually at the end of a delivery route. As a result, more deliveries can be made in the course of a workday. In addition, errors are eliminated when data is

entered directly into a system rather than being transposed from paper records. Given access to wireless devices, employees are empowered with information that allows them to provide service functions more efficiently, and customer service improves dramatically because those providing services have accurate information about customers.

Equipping the workforce with wireless technology increases productivity as well. This is one of the more surprising advantages of workforce mobility cited by company leaders, who are increasingly implementing off-site work programs using wireless technology specifically for the boost in productivity associated with doing so. Among the reasons cited for the increase in productivity are fewer distractions and the elimination of commute time. Companies actually gain thousands of dollars per employee by allowing workers the freedom to work remotely. The savings is accounted for not only through increased productivity, but also through a decrease in absenteeism and increase in retention. Savings in real estate costs associated with the need to maintain less office space can be added to this figure as well.

Of course to be truly efficient, a wireless network must also be secure, and adequate support for the network must be readily available as well. In the past, fears about compromising security have made IT managers hesitant to embrace wireless protocols, but those fears are being abated as the technology advances. Now, working to keep application integrity intact is a logical part of the process by which remote technology is growing in prevalence. Typically, wireless access points

involve using permission or denial access control, which must be well maintained from the center out to ensure that application integrity as well as network security are maintained. Also, while there are many concerns about inadequate support of wireless networks, there are vendors that can keep up with and support the wireless thin client networks they help put in place.

Decision makers cite a number of considerations when seeking solutions for wireless network communications. Warranty, price, and product availability are key to the selection process. Other factors include separation of the software selection process, which often precedes and remains separate from decisions regarding the selection of device hardware and infrastructure. Moreover, projects are generally being scaled down to address a more finite application cluster or user group. Phased approaches to system deployments are becoming more common with end users frequently starting with wireless e-mail as their initiation into the world of enterprise mobility solutions. Further, device vendor brand is being replaced by device price, technical and customer support and product availability as the critical factors driving purchasing decisions.

The decisions involved in finding the most cost effective and productive way to enable a mobile workforce with wireless capabilities are numerous and complex. While many vendors can supply the tools to get the job done, they do not all know how to apply and use these tools in differing environments. In many cases, as companies seek to gain a competitive edge in this rapidly changing market,

choosing the right vendor can make all the difference. For example, a company like AT Labs, a Silicon Valley-based provider of simplified, thin-client computing technology solutions worldwide, can work with enterprises to implement wireless thin client capabilities that meet their needs and budgets. With their focus on developing technologies specifically for the purpose of increasing productivity and mobility, companies like AT Labs understand how to enable mobility and can consult with organizations that need new technologies to collectively determine the best solutions. The company can also provide all aspects of support, a critical issue that companies who implement wireless networks often find lagging.

About AT Labs, Inc.

Founded in the heart of Silicon Valley, AT Labs Inc. (AT Labs) is the fastest growing provider of simplified mobile wireless networks using Thin Client technology. AT Labs focuses on developing wireless Thin Client products to provide low-cost and secured access to all intranet and internet applications.

What is our mission?

Our goal is to provide you with the best mobile wireless computing solutions, the most advanced technology, and superior technical support. We have the expertise to expand your success—both now and in the future.

What do we make?

Wireless Thin Client computing is the next evolution in enterprise productivity for both general purpose and application-specific tasks. With everything on a central server, all users—wherever they may be in the field—have the same access to the same applications at the same time. If there is a problem with any individual unit, its data is safe on the server.

Wireless Thin Client appliances from AT Labs provide you with longer battery life, which saves you money in power consumption and conserves your storage space. Ultra-slim, ultra-light, and ultra-powerful—this wireless appliance replaces old PC problems with 21st-century expertise and power.

Desktop Thin Clients feature everything you've become accustomed to with regular PC's—minus the hardware and application headaches. Windows, Web, Java, and mainframe applications run just like on a regular PC. Updating and management are controlled from a single point, making all changes universal and immediate. Your entire network functions as a solid unit.

Easy to setup, each NetTerminal™ is preconfigured with embedded Windows or Linux operating systems. Plug-n-Play connectivity gets you up and running fast. Standard NetAdmin™ remote management software provides you with total control of your network.