



MSI empowers mobile workforce with 'anywhere' access to desktop applications

Accounting Network Worldwide (MSI) needed a solution that would allow its increasingly mobile workforce to access all software applications and business data from outside the office. The company turned to Intercept to provide a monthly subscription based IT service offering access to the very latest Microsoft business applications. MSI has been able to reduce its IT costs and offer an even more responsive service to its members around the world.

Solution Summary

Situation

MSI wanted to provide its increasingly mobile workforce with access to business data and applications while on the move, improve the IT support it received, and cut its IT costs.

Solution

OnlineDesktop provides MSI with access to the very latest Microsoft Windows 2003 based software applications from any Internet enabled computing device, anywhere in the world.

Benefits

- › Ability to access business data and applications from virtually any computing device, anywhere in the world
- › Standardised IT environment
- › Hardware savings
- › 40% saving on annual IT costs

Back office technology

Microsoft Windows 2003 Advanced Server
Citrix CPS 4.0
Softricity SoftGrid
Microsoft Exchange 2003 Ent.
Anti-virus software
Black Spider (email screening)

Front office technology

Windows 2003 (Virtual Desktop)
Microsoft Outlook 2003
Microsoft Office 2003 Pro
FileMaker Pro
Safeword authentication tokens

The Challenge

After years of unresponsive support for its IT systems, MSI decided the time had come for change. Despite high IT support costs, over the years the company had acquired an IT system based on outdated hardware and an assortment of operating systems.

As a small organisation which prides itself on its ability to competently service over 5,000 members in 85 countries, the clever use of IT was becoming increasingly important to its objectives of running a more efficient, streamlined and responsive business. However, MSI's existing IT set-up had started to hinder rather than aid progress towards these goals.

James Mendelssohn, chief executive of MSI, says: "For a small business we had disproportionately high IT costs and were still not using technology which would enable us to operate as a more agile organisation."

MSI also wanted to empower its staff through the use of a more effective remote working solution. Due to the international nature of its business, it is not uncommon for MSI staff to spend over 100 days a year on business overseas. Mendelssohn adds: "To remain responsive to our members when out of the office, we needed a solution that would allow us to work more flexibly and easily access core business data and software applications while on the move."

"We were aware of the existence of technology that could help us create a virtual office, but weren't sure what we needed and if we could afford it."

The Solution

MSI was introduced to Intercept which specialises in providing hosted solutions to the small to medium sized business sector, via its OnlineDesktop service.

OnlineDesktop now provides MSI with fully managed 'virtual desktops' for its entire staff, with a whole suite of applications being accessed over a variety of connections, including the Internet. All services are provided for a fixed monthly cost per user and hosted offsite at Intercept's data centres in London.

For a fixed monthly cost per user, MSI now has access to the very latest Microsoft Windows based software applications including Microsoft Office 2003 and Microsoft Outlook 2003, from any Internet enabled computer, anywhere in the world.

'Anywhere' access to applications

Mendelssohn is delighted by the freedom the OnlineDesktop solution has created for his staff: "Not only do we have the very latest Microsoft software, but we can access it from anywhere we are able to get online. Whether we are logged in from home or from a cyber café on the other side of the Atlantic, our members still receive the same high levels of service they have come to expect from us in the past."

The Latest Software

"I feel a lot more relaxed about our IT systems now that Intercept is managing the service for us," adds Mendelssohn. "I no longer have to worry about licensing arrangements or security issues, and all my staff are migrated to the latest software applications as soon as they become available via OnlineDesktop."

Reduced Costs

MSI estimates that OnlineDesktop has cut its annual IT costs by approximately 40 per cent. Fixed IT costs, reduced hardware costs and a support service provided remotely by the OnlineDesktop helpdesk means MSI has been freed from the distractions of daily IT issues and can focus on the business of serving its members.

"We have achieved more than I ever thought was possible in a short period of time," says Mendelssohn. "Furthermore, we are making substantial savings on hardware as we can access the latest software via the Internet using relatively cheap, low specification computers."

He continues: "The support we have received from the team at OnlineDesktop has been excellent and is always provided in a cheerful and responsive manner. Without fail problems have been sorted out quickly and efficiently."

The Future

Mendelssohn adds: "We will soon be moving to new offices in central London and will be asking the team at Intercept to advise us on how we can set up an office environment based on the latest wireless technologies. We feel very confident that Intercept's OnlineDesktop can help us stay ahead of the game by providing us with solutions that will allow us to become even more responsive and innovative in the eyes of our members."

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