

Virtually All Businesses Will Have Virtual Employees

Is your application ready? Your language is!

By Kevin King

Technological advances, economic volatility, and global uncertainty have sent shockwaves through the business community. Many organizations, in an attempt to remain viable, have turned to virtual offices as a solution to the new world volatility. Virtual offices allow organizations to employ individuals from virtually anywhere in the world. Organizations whose software will accommodate the virtual world gain the freedom of allowing their employees to work from home, other countries, or wherever their plane is stranded on a particular day.

Quite often organizations are slower to implement virtual solutions than they need to be, because they believe it will be necessary to purchase new software in order to facilitate their virtual office plans. BASIS Customers have a variety of options that make virtual offices virtually painless. BASIS' latest product release, BBJ, comes with a pure Java Thin Client that allows customers to run any BBJ-powered applications in a web browser. The communication between the server and the browser (Thin Client) is protected with secure socket layer (SSL) encryption, the standard protocol used for secure connections over the Internet.

For Customers who are still using VPRO/5, Microsoft provides "terminal server" functionality that will allow remote employees to use a "Terminal Server Advanced Client" (TSAC) web browser ActiveX control plug-in. This plug-in will facilitate legacy character and graphical applications to run in a browser in a LAN, WAN, or Internet environment. The free TSAC can be downloaded from www.microsoft.com/WINDOWS2000/downloads/recommended/TSAC/tsac.asp

Some of your Customers may still be using applications with Character User Interfaces (CUI). There is a solution for these Customers as well. Several companies have produced "Terminal Emulator" web browser plug-ins that will facilitate virtual offices for organizations that are still running legacy software. Most of these Customers have a plan for upgrading to a current version of the software, and this solution buys them the time they need to make the upgrade in a reasonable and well-planned manner.

Virtual employees may access their organization's software through dedicated phone lines, or over the Internet. The ubiquity of the Internet makes this method the most acceptable. Implementing a Virtual Private Network (VPN) at the organization will provide the security necessary to restrict access to only the virtual employees.

The virtual office is a concept that is here to stay. If your Customers have not asked you about it yet, it is only a matter of time. There are numerous ways that BASIS-powered software can provide virtual solutions. Familiarize yourself with the virtual techniques that suit your own Customers and business practices, so that you will have an answer ready when the inevitable question is asked, "Will your software run in a virtual office?"