

mobility enables the on-demand enterprise



Kevin Bland, Director of Channel Sales, Citrix

Consider a doctor making rounds at a hospital. In the past he used a pen and clipboard to write notes that were later distributed to others for action. Now he can quickly complete an electronic form and immediately send the information where it is needed. The recipient doesn't have to decipher a hand-written note. And if the doctor makes an incorrect entry, the application will respond with an error message rather than accepting erroneous data.

Or, consider the mobile executive who must act quickly to capture an opportunity or to solve a problem. In the past, the executive's snap decision might have required a 'best guess' about some relevant business metric - inventory levels, commodity prices, interest rate fluctuations or some other factor. Today, armed with wireless application access, the executive can instantly acquire the data needed to minimise guesswork and make the best informed decision.

The on-demand enterprise is increasingly a reality. Organisations need to have an adaptable IT infrastructure that can respond quickly and effectively to changes in the business environment. These can range from external forces such as regulation, compliance or government moves to promote flexible working or internal forces such as growth or the need to cut costs. According to IDC, the access infrastructure sector will grow to exceed \$21.6Bn worldwide by 2007.

Mobility makes IT more challenging

For all their promise of flexibility and productivity, wireless technologies pose a variety of challenges that can undermine their value and expose an organisation to risk.

Probably the most familiar risk is security. Wireless technologies are inherently less secure because they rely on radio waves that travel in all directions and are easily intercepted. At another level, the ease with which high speed WiFi access points can be plugged into an office Ethernet raises the spectre of 'rogue' or unauthorised devices that can jeopardise corporate systems and compromise corporate data. Finally, small mobile devices are easy to steal, or to forget in an airline seat pocket. It may be inconvenient to lose one's electronic address book but more serious if the device also contains sensitive corporate financial data. The loss can be catastrophic if the device is wireless-enabled and contains scripts to log onto a corporate network.

Security is far from the only challenge posed by mobile/wireless technologies. Even 'simple' deployments can be daunting, given the time required to configure WiFi access points, to set the initial radio and security parameters of mobile devices and to load any additional software the devices may need. In addition, operating systems have to be patched and applications updated, creating a long-term support burden made all the heavier because the equipment is broadly dispersed in the hands of mobile workers who may only rarely visit the office. Then there are issues of limited bandwidth and unreliable connections. Individually and together, these issues can make mobile/wireless applications far less appealing in the real world than they were on the drawing board.

Moreover, these mobility-related challenges don't exist in a vacuum. They come in addition to various challenges already facing corporate IT departments, many of which have nothing to do with mobility. These

challenges include the inflexibility of traditional systems, which leads to over-provisioning and under-utilisation; and the challenges of managing thick-client systems (including 'smart' mobile devices), in which installing and maintaining applications, patches, anti-virus software and the like becomes costly, time-consuming obligation.

According to Kevin Bland, Director of Channel Sales at Citrix, "Customers are aware that how they provide secure access has everything to do with being able to support mobile or flexible working, and with the ability to comply with financial or privacy regulations. It's important that you know who is accessing what, where and how they are doing it."

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Citrix MetaFrame Access Suite in the On-Demand Enterprise

The Citrix MetaFrame Access Suite contains several capabilities designed specifically to support mobile applications by making them easy to use and shielding users from the underlying complexity of wireless networking.

Mobility enables the on-demand enterprise continued

One of the basic ways in which the MetaFrame Access Suite enables mobile business solutions is its built-in support for a wide range of computing devices. This support spans all Windows desktops, notebooks and PDAs; Apple Macs; Nokia communicators; and, Linux laptops. This means that the majority of enterprises can adopt the MetaFrame Access Suite and provide access to enterprise applications and data without having to replace existing devices and standardise on one platform.

Another important capability in Citrix MetaFrame Access Suite is SmoothRoaming. It allows the user to maintain an application session while shifting from one device to another and while roaming across multiple wired and wireless networks - for example, shifting from an 802.11b Wireless Local Area Network in the office to a cellular or Wireless Wide Area Network (WWAN) while en-route to a new location. Citrix's access infrastructure solution also pays dividends in the mobile realm by allowing applications to be maintained on the server and deployed to users without having to 'touch' each client device. This is a great improvement over deploying and upgrading applications on mobile devices.

Another essential capability is application and data security. MetaFrame Access Suite provides a multi-tier security solution that provides strong encryption and user authentication. This capability becomes increasingly significant as distributed environments and mobile

technologies drive device proliferation and spread more employees and devices over larger geographic areas.

Another key security-related benefit is that IT can configure Citrix MetaFrame Access Suite to compel users to store sensitive information on secure servers, not on end-user devices, eliminating risk if a device is lost or stolen.

Because it addresses key issues for both fixed and mobile workers, Citrix access infrastructure can be a cost-effective way for businesses to increase their agility and responsiveness, while also Citrix solutions deserve close consideration by businesses seeking to become on-demand enterprises.

Recommended Solutions

Vistorm is a Platinum Partner for Citrix and we specialise in helping organisations deploy access infrastructure solutions that enable the on-demand enterprise.

To find out more about how Citrix MetaFrame Access Suite can help you manage the mobile enterprise more effectively contact your Vistorm Account Manager or email us at info@vistorm.com