



Abacus Intouch

Issue 5 September 2004

Homeworking Special.

Recent technology developments and an improvement in Broadband availability throughout the UK has made the possibility of working from home and accessing your files and databases more cost effective than it has ever been. The need for expensive leased lines to gain is gone and access is as quick as being in the office.

The solution can be used not just to access Abacus but to gain access to all your files and can also be used to tie in to Surveillance systems with a computer network interface, so you can see what is happening in your shop even in the middle of the night!

We have devoted this issue of Intouch to giving you a heads-up on working from home.

The Remote Desktop.

Remote Desktop is Microsoft technology based upon the terminal services technology included in Windows Server software.

Remote Desktop enables you to access your server or another computer as though you are sat in front of it. The programs you run are run on the computer you are accessing so there is no real performance delay even though you are using a dial up or Broadband connection at home. The software simply transmits the screen display to your computer and any mouse movements or keystrokes to the host, this enables the software to run effectively even on a modem connection!



Do I need broadband to use this feature? Not at home although the faster the connection the better as this benefits processes like printing. The shop needs to be connected to the internet using fixed IP addresses (see Security) but this connection can be used for other things as well, including web access, e-mail, and accessing live dealer links from manufacturers such as Specialized.

How much does the software cost? The technology is built into Windows XP Pro and all the Server Versions since NT4. XP Pro only supports one active session at a time. Server software can support two sessions without additional licensing.

What do I need?

1. A host computer running Windows Server or XP Professional Software.
2. A home computer ideally running Windows ME or better with internet access. (You probably have this already)
3. A broadband connection at your shop with 2 or more Static IP addresses (See Zen Internet)
4. A Broadband Router & Sonicwall TZ170
5. The VPN Client Software
6. Remote Desktop Client Software (Free from Microsoft)

Contact Steve on 0870 442 8240 for more details.

Stop Press - We now have Yellow Peelable Sale Labels available for Barcode Printers at £14 a roll, Call for details.

Security.

O.K. so you have broadband, you have remote desktop and you can access your network using Fixed IP addresses, brilliant! Unfortunately so can everyone else!

What you need is to be able to access your network and files securely but stop anyone else accessing the system. You need a technology called VPN or tunnelling. This requires a firewall with VPN capability such as the Sonicwall TZ170.

The Sonicwall provides a barrier between your publicly accessible broadband connection with a fixed public address and your internal network with private addresses. Like a security guard the Sonicwall allows authorised traffic in and out of your network but blocks access to unauthorised traffic. To gain access to your network through the Sonicwall you need to have the appropriate client software and know a securely encrypted password. The client and the Sonicwall need to be perfectly matched to enable access and all data passed between the two is encrypted using military strength encoding so no-one else can intercept and view your data, this is called tunnelling. In tunnelling you effectively set up a secure tunnel to your network that only you can use, a virtual leased line. The tunnel can be established from any internet connection in the world using a laptop computer with the client loaded on it. We use this technology to remotely manage a number of our larger customers!



The same technology can be used to link shops together, however, in this instance we use a pair of matched Sonicwall Firewalls to establish and maintain the tunnels.

Zen Internet

We have been successfully partner Zen Internet for over a year now and this relationship gives us many benefits over other ISPs. Zen is an Internet service Provider based in Lancashire that regularly tops the best broadband provider polls and offers an excellent value service.

The service from Zen costs £50 to install and then just £23.82 ex. VAT per month and includes the provision of 5 static IP addresses (essential for connecting from home or linking sites). Migrations to Zen from ISPs that support migration currently do not incur an installation fee.

Zen keep us informed of all the technical details of our customers service enabling us to supply broadband hardware pre-configured and ready to use. The reporting procedures are excellent throughout the installation and also in the unlikely event of a fault.

All in all the Zen Service provides unsurpassed quality and value representing saving upwards of £10 per month compared to other ISPs.

To order broadband or migrate to Zen contact Steve on 0870 442 8240.



Zen Internet Ltd
PARTNER

Intouch Special.

This months special is offered in conjunction with our ISP partner Zen Internet. Simply order a new broadband circuit or migrate to Zen before 31st October and you can purchase a Pre-Configured ready to go Broadband Router with 54 Mbps Wireless access point for £180.00 excluding VAT and receive a free wireless access card for a laptop PC worth £50.

