IBM

IBM Network Station charts new direction at UK's Citimap.

It doesn't take a big company to make effective use of network computers. Just ask Citimap, a fast-growing London company with 14 employees. The company — which designs, produces and distributes free maps and tourist guides to hotels, airlines and tourist information centers — is one of many smaller businesses taking advantage of network computing with the IBM Network Station™ network computer.

Citimap is the UK's largest supplier of free tourist guides. While its maps and guides are free, businesses use Citimap's products to advertise to tourists and visitors. In addition, municipalities commission special maps to promote their attractions and to publicize specific development projects.

Meeting diverse needs
What led Citimap to choose the IBM Network Station? Initially, Citimap used Apple® Macintosh® computers across all departments — sales, administration, design and finance. Then, as more and more business applications — including the accounting package Citimap uses — targeted the PC platform, the company began integrating PCs into its business, as well.

As Citimap faced the need to replace the Mac® computers in its sales and administration department, the company realized that buying new Macs to meet basic database access needs was too costly and wasteful of computing power. "It would've been processing overkill," says Matthew Atkinson, Citimap's managing director. "Most desktop computers — Macs and PCs — come with too many things bolted on, such as CD-ROMs and other capabilities we don't need."

It was about this time that Atkinson heard about network computing. "Our database is critical to our business," says Atkinson. "We use it for sales, faxes, correspondence, contract management, distribution, invoicing, credit control and other things. Our sales and admin people

Application	Integrated network for accessing sales, administration, design, and finance applications off an NT server
Hardware	IBM Network Station, IBM PC server, Apple Macintosh
Software	IBM Network Station Manager, WinCenter from Network Computing Devices, PC-based applications, including Microsoft Windows

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need enhanced terminal access to this information, and, after careful consideration, we realized that network computing was the most feasible and cost-effective solution to the problem."

While Citimap looked at several network computer vendors, they chose the IBM Network Station over the competition because it was proven and shipping.

"We considered IBM and three of its major competitors," Atkinson says. "We decided that the IBM Network Station provided the best and most readily available solution. IBM said: Order it today and you'll have it next week. We now have the Network Station as part of a network-centric architecture that easily allows us to deliver the functionality each employee requires."

Today, Citimap's business has a mix of eight Network Stations, eight Macs and one PC. All are connected to an IBM PC server running Windows NT®. "All three platforms are necessary," says Atkinson. "Our sales team needs the NCs for sales and administration. Our designers need the Macs for layout and design. And our finance people need the PC to run financial applications."

Saving time and money

"Clearly, the opportunity to save money attracted us to the Network Station," says Atkinson. "In purchase cost alone, we saved 10 to 15 thousand pounds — including the cost of the additional software which normally comes bundled with PCs or Macs. But the real savings are in the life cycle, or maintenance, expenditures. Initially and over time it just simply costs less to own a network computer than it does to own a PC or a Mac."

One of the biggest plusses of the IBM Network Station for Citimap is its centralized, server-based administration and management. "We don't have a full-time IT person, so it's easier for us to have a solution that implements changes to software on the server, rather than on lots of desktops," Atkinson says. As an example, he points to the company's recent installation of a program that, among other things, allows users to send and receive e-mail. "I simply put the program on the server, and every Network Station user was immediately able to use it," he says. "Updating once at the server makes things a whole lot easier."

The Network Station also eliminates expensive, failure-prone components on the desktop, which further helps to reduce costs. As Atkinson notes, the Network Station has virtually no moving parts.

"Network computers offered us a chance to move to a network-centric environment at relatively low cost," Atkinson says. "Everyone on our sales team now uses a centralized database rather than standalone machines. Even our designers access the database to fax blueprints."

"The beauty of the Network Station," he says, "is that it's not tied to any particular operating system or processor architecture, and you don't have to worry about replacing outdated technology at the desktop. In other words, the Network Station leaves our options for the future wide open, and that makes it even more suited to our needs."

For more information

To find out more about how network computing with the IBM Network Station and the IBM family of servers can help you make the most of your business opportunities, call 1 800 IBM-7080, priority code 6N7BK005, in North America. Outside North America, call 416 383-5152, priority code 6N7BK005. Or contact your IBM Business Partner or local IBM representative.

If you have access to the Internet, you can find additional Network Station information via the World Wide Web at *www.ibm.com/nc.*

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