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Case Study

GRICtraveler™ Corporate Remote Access



*Solves Connectivity and Cost Challenges for
Global 100 Enterprise*



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Itochu Technology, Inc. Chooses GRIC for Corporate Remote Internet Access

“GRICtraveler Corporate Remote Access provides us with secure, encrypted access so our employees can work freely wherever their jobs call them – whether that is a trading subsidiary, customer site, hotel, or at home. The application offers a simple, consistent user interface and seamless interoperability with our VPN solution. The result has been a huge cost savings, especially with respect to our mobile users.”

K.M., Director of Internet Services, Itochu Technology Inc.

A globally integrated corporation that ranks sixth in the Global 100, Itochu Corporation is a leader among Japan’s general trading companies with offices in over 80 countries and operations that cover a broad spectrum of industries. Itochu has over 7,000 employees with 2,600 of them working overseas. Itochu’s global trading presence is synonymous with mobility. Every month, a couple thousand Itochu employees work in remote environments traveling, for example, to Azerbaijan to help develop oil fields or to Saudi Arabia to construct the world’s largest desalination plant.

In early 1998, Itochu’s technology division – Itochu Technology, Inc. (ITI) located in Santa Clara, CA – moved the enterprise from the traditional method of providing dial-up access via modem pools to a global corporate remote access solution, GRICtraveler™ Corporate Remote Access from GRIC Communications.

“Until we introduced GRICtraveler, we wasted significant amount of money on long distance access charges and dial-up modem pools for remote access. GRICtraveler eliminated the need for modem pools and allowed our users to access our corporate networks worldwide for the price of a local call.”

The substantial savings experienced by Itochu result from three distinctive elements of the GRICtraveler Corporate Remote Access service. The first is low access charges. When compared to dial-up options through modem pools, toll-free numbers, and long distance calls, GRICtraveler Corporate Remote Access typically provides savings of up to 91%. The savings are a direct outcome of the fact that mobile users can use a local phone number to connect to the Internet instead of placing a domestic or international long distance call.

The minimal equipment investment required to operate the service also contributes to cost savings. Compatible with popular hardware platforms and operating systems, GRICtraveler does not require a change in legacy systems. In addition, the total cost of ownership is much smaller as there are no modem pools to maintain and upgrade. This translates to savings in staff time and resources as well. With no modem pools to constantly manage, the administrative burden on IT personnel is lifted.

Thirdly, the high-speed points of presence (POPs) that characterize GRICtraveler Corporate Remote Access allow mobile users to access on-line information faster. With 98% of the POPs 33K or faster and 76% at least 56K (90% of these are V.90), mobile users are able to send and receive data more quickly, so they spend less on connection charges.

“With 20 domestic offices and over 1,000 overseas, having a remote access service with global reach was one of our highest priorities.”

Global network coverage is typically measured by the number of POPs worldwide. The larger the number of POPs, the greater the global reach and likelihood that mobile workers will be able to access the Internet through a local POP rather than calling a long distance number. Through the GRIC Alliance Network™ – one of the largest managed TCP/IP networks composed of 360 top-tier service providers – GRIC delivers local access to nearly 4,000 POPs. These POPs are strategically located in business centers around the world as well as in hard to reach corners of the globe, ensuring broad geographic coverage.

“If I only have to train users and support people once, that’s fantastic. If one of our roaming users has a problem getting connected, he or she can call the local ISP rather than trying to get support from the home office. This makes sense given our employees travel in different time zones and may need help when we’re all asleep.”

The design of GRICtraveler Corporate Remote Access incorporates several infrastructure features that work together to overcome the maintenance and cost challenges enterprise IT departments typically face with modem pools. For example, the simple installation process supports the efficient use of staff resources. The GRICtraveler software can be installed in a matter of hours and users can download the GRICdial™ client software (included in the package) from an enterprise’s Intranet or GRIC’s web site.

Enterprise employees (both mobile users and IT staff) also benefit from real-time support. Itochu mobile users, for example, can count on immediate support from local service providers (i.e., members of the GRIC Alliance Network) when it is after hours in the United States and Itochu Technology Inc.’s staff are gone for the day. For the Itochu Technology Inc.’s IT staff, they can escalate trouble tickets to GRIC’s 24x7 Network Operations Centers in California, Kuala Lumpur, and Paris which provide full network monitoring, formal trouble ticketing processes, and proactive management of all customer connection issues.

And finally, GRICtraveler Corporate Remote Access delivers accurate settlement reports, making it easy for IT managers to allocate costs by department, region, or other method as appropriate for their organization.

“At Itochu, our mission is to facilitate prompt responses in today’s borderless, rapidly evolving markets. In order to do that, our employees require access to company information and each other whenever and wherever they need it. And it has to be simple because it is difficult to support remote users working in different time zones than we are.”

The three connection steps that distinguish GRICtraveler Corporate Remote Access have freed Itochu employees from cumbersome dial-up processes, giving them almost instant access to the Internet from thousands of cities any time of the day or night. With GRICtraveler, they just launch GRICdial and then point, click, and connect. GRICdial can auto-launch the VPN client used by Itochu, so that the user does not have to spend time opening the VPN application manually. Other time-saving features of GRICdial include an integrated POP phonebook and self-updating POP list, which ensures that phone numbers are always current.

The simple effectiveness of GRICdial benefits IT personnel as much as it does mobile users. The straightforward dial-up approach means that users can easily gain access whenever they need it, without having to call the IT department for help.

As mobility increasingly defines life and work in today's world, GRICtraveler Corporate Remote Access is fast becoming the way enterprises stay connected to each other, customers, suppliers, and other key constituents. Delivering measurable benefits to both mobile users and the IT personnel who support them, GRIC's global corporate remote access solution is the choice for large enterprises like Itochu that depend on mobile workers to maintain a leadership position in the global economy.

Patented Roaming Technology

Patented roaming technology is the power behind GRICtraveler Corporate Remote Access. The service operates via GRIC's Internet-based platform that enables Internet Protocol (IP) communications by combining clearinghouse and settlement technology with a worldwide managed network. This platform, which supports more than 360 service providers and many more enterprise organizations worldwide, consists of internally developed software – GRIC Convergent Services Platform (GRIC CSP™) – and the GRIC Alliance Network™.

GRIC CSP, a reliable IP Operational Support System, performs all of the mission-critical clearinghouse services associated with remote access including authentication, routing, authorization, settlement, and network management. It forms the technology foundation that facilitates the introduction, deployment, and management of multiple Internet services – such as GRICtraveler Corporate Remote Access – across the GRIC Alliance Network. The Alliance Network was formed by joining the local, national and international networks of hundreds of top-tier service providers including AOL, MindSpring, Concentric, Fujitsu, WinStar, NTT, France Telecom, Australia Online, Primus, PSINet, China Telecom and Hong Kong Telecom.

By making it possible to connect to the Internet from the farthest reaches of the globe by dialing a local phone number, GRIC's unique combination of technology and worldwide network has turned the promise of Internet roaming into reality.

Company Information

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Multiple Internet Services. One Global Solution