



Reach for the cloud to save your company cash



TUESDAY VIEW

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BACK in 1993, I worked for a firm which had around 200 employees using Apple Macs. We only had a part time IT manager because – with Macs – simply rebooting the computer normally solves any problems. It was magic. For 15 years, I've struggled to recreate that easy experience. And I think I just have, after my firm started using Nasstar's Desktop Now.

In the middle of this global financial crisis, it is also important to remember we are experiencing the biggest change in the IT marketplace since the advent of the internet. The emergence of high-speed, low-cost internet over the last few years has enabled a shift of power from the desktop computer to the web.

Charles Black founded Nasstar in January 1998. I first experienced the firm last week, after it took Ariadne's burdensome local IT system, which

was being poorly maintained, and delivered a brilliantly simple "hosted desktop" solution.

The Nasstar team managed a flawless transition, moving our firm from history to the future. For example, on a Sunday I sometimes forget that it's 11am, and call people I want to speak to. Andy Kyriakides, our project manager, wasn't phased by the out-of-hours call and spent 10 minutes sorting out my question. What other Aim-quoted professional services firm do you know that can give you that kind of service.

Nasstar Hosted Desktop is part of a huge revolution, which involves delivering IT services over the internet;

and the vision has huge implications for the delivery of TV, radio, and music. The revolution has seen casualties at Microsoft, which recently announced it was laying off 5,000 employees.

The other winner from the migration to the "cloud" – a reference to the fact that a computer's power is no longer on a desk – is Google. Last week, it announced the launch of the GDrive, an online hard disk that will allow users to store their files in the "cloud". Similarly, there is a suite of Google web applications, which provide an off-desktop alternative to Microsoft Office.

The clever thing about Nasstar is that it doesn't try to change what people use – but the way they use it, the

way they buy it, and the way they feel about it. Thanks to Hosted Desktop, I can now access my company PC from any place, and at any time. It has also slashed Ariadne's IT costs.

Nasstar have about 50 companies using Hosted Desktop now, from small, two-man outfits to organisations which have over 800 employees. By eliminating the IT manager – or getting them to focus on something core to the business – you can start to see real savings. And if it's good enough for the Easy Group and Allied Healthcare, it's good enough for my firm. For those looking to cut costs, it's a good place to start.

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