

Innovative Hosting Model Delivers Dramatic Cost Savings to U.K. Businesses

Nasstar Hosted Desktop offers customers flexible, secure access to Microsoft Office applications and relieves significant IT burden

“We are always looking to drive down costs and do things better—with Nasstar, we can do just that. Its services will allow us to concentrate on managing our businesses rather than our IT.”

Stelios Haji-Ioannou Founder and Entrepreneur, easyGroup

Businesses today recognise that managing in-house IT systems is expensive and can drain IT resources. Hosting company Nasstar, a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner, has evidence to show that the software-as-a-service model is a natural progression for forward-thinking enterprises that prefer to invest in more valuable business interests, such as people, growth, and sales.

Nasstar provides Microsoft Hosted Exchange and Microsoft Office Professional 2007 through a browser-based version of Microsoft Office XP Professional to companies over the Internet. Nasstar Hosted Desktop gives customers the freedom to focus on core business strategies and streamline their workforce by removing the burden of managing these services internally. Users access applications through their browsers, but—as Dan Smith, Partner Manager at Nasstar explains—in no way is usability compromised. “Employees experience the same look and feel as they would with an in-house system—from the start menu, to the individual tools in each application.”

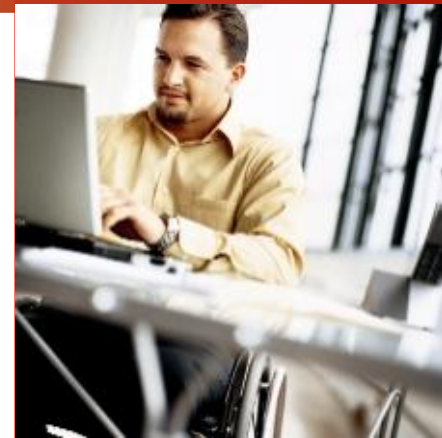
Employees can log on to their Microsoft Office tools remotely from any computer. This is made possible by Terminal Services in Windows Server® 2003 operating system, which ensures all users’ files remain separate from the server and are kept on a centralised file cluster.

Smith explains: “Terminal Services helps the solution to scale with users’ loads as well as during operational peaks. People no longer have to carry around a device to access their work,” he says. “But even if they choose to, there’s no information stored on the local hard drive, so a lost device does not mean lost data.”

Eliminating Large IT Investments

Nasstar licenses the products on a monthly basis through its Microsoft Service Provider Licence Agreement and generates usage reports for Microsoft. The hosted model works like a subscription service. A small monthly charge per user entitles businesses to the latest-release systems without having to make large up-front investments in infrastructure. “Customers do not need to run local copies and they cannot download the applications to run locally,” says Smith. “We simply disable the service if their contract ends.”

Start-up organisations were among the first to see true added value from this approach. But Smith says that today a growing number of larger companies with existing in-house systems are moving over to a hosted model. “It’s not just buying and installing software that’s expensive,” he says. “IT teams spend a lot of time maintaining the desktop, rather than actually developing and supporting core business applications. It’s far more



Customer
Nasstar

Web Site
www.nasstar.com

Country or Region
United Kingdom

Industry
Hosting—Hosting and application service providers

Customer Profile
Nasstar offers computing as a simple subscription service. Its Hosted Desktop model gives customers access to Microsoft® Office applications over the Internet, rather than on a local computer.

- Benefits**
- Companies can focus on strategy, not IT.
 - Data is safe if a device is lost.
 - Users can access applications securely from any location.
 - Hosting dramatically reduces up-front and ongoing IT costs.
 - The hosted system is secure.

- Software and Services**
- Microsoft Office
Microsoft Office Professional 2007
 - Technologies
Microsoft Hosted Exchange



cost effective to subscribe to a service without the ongoing overheads of system management.”

Pinnacle Staffing Group is among the larger organisations using Nasstar Hosted Desktop. When it split from a larger organisation, it could no longer share the existing IT systems. With more than 30 sites to manage and only a small number of staff at each, the cost of implementing a new IT infrastructure in-house was a huge challenge. “Core systems, such as the databases for candidates’ CVs, would have been held at individual sites, restricting access to that data across the business,” says Smith. “When Pinnacle looked at the expense of building the solutions in-house, it calculated that the hosted model would save 50 per cent in up-front costs alone.”

Providing Room to Grow

Organisations also need systems that scale easily. easyGroup, for example, is a dynamic company that until recently ran its systems in-house. The success of the group has led to rapid growth for its individual companies, such as easyHotel, easyCruise, and easyCar. Such fast expansion is traditionally associated with a large and expensive IT burden—one that the group has avoided by working with Nasstar. At easyCar, for example, the hosted service has eliminated the need for two data centres. The company also plans to move offices, and with no complex infrastructure to configure, the move—which might otherwise take weeks—can happen over a couple of days.

Stelios Haji-Ioannou, Founder and Entrepreneur, easyGroup, says: “We’re always looking to drive down costs and do things better—with Nasstar, we can do just that. Its services will allow us to concentrate on managing our businesses rather than our IT.” Nasstar also hosts easyCar line-of-business systems, such as its accounting packages and booking systems, and continues to add other Microsoft technologies as they become available.

Enhancing Workplace Flexibility

Businesses place more importance than ever on the use of applications to boost productivity both in the workplace and in the field. Howards Group is a

property services company, with an estate agent service that operates from multiple sites. With Nasstar Hosted Desktop, it has standardised the applications used by employees, who securely access calendaring tools, e-mail, and desktop programs from any location. Today, the organisation employs just two IT administrators to support 250 staff across the United Kingdom, and enjoys substantial cost savings. Martin Cunningham, Chief Executive Officer at Howards Estate Agents, says: “Nasstar’s innovative approach to IT has greatly assisted us in increasing our turnover, rising from £1.7 million (U.S.\$3.36 million) in 2004 to £4.5 million in 2008.”

Maximising Security

Some organisations may have concerns about the security implications of external data management. In fact, the hosted model can deliver far greater security than most in-house solutions. As Smith explains, few companies can completely control where documents are stored, or find the time and resources to back up servers and apply the latest security measures. Nasstar customers benefit from 128-bit encryption through to individual password authentication. Data can only be accessed and viewed by individuals within an organisation and is protected by enterprise-grade firewalls, antivirus software, and intrusion detection. “We offer a far higher level of security than many businesses often have to start with,” says Smith. “We constantly maintain and update it, so that they don’t have to worry about that side of the business.”

Microsoft Office System

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