



NEWS BYTES

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TRILLIUM Consulting

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Trillium's Mission:

"Helping organizations use technology to accomplish their business goals."

Outlook Tip

Do you end up scanning your Outlook folders to find messages you've previously sent or received as part of an extended e-mail conversation? Outlook can find and display these messages for you, if they are part of the same conversation string.

Just select one of the messages in the e-mail conversation, click on **Actions, Find All**, then click on **Related Messages**.

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An Information Worker's Bill of Rights

Drowning in a sea of information – that's how University of California-Berkeley professor and *New York Times* business columnist Hal Varian characterizes the quandary that faces an increasingly tech-savvy world: The amount of information we produce is growing exponentially, but our capacity, as human beings, for processing and making sense of that information is not. We were promised a wealth of information at our fingertips, and the march of technological progress has more than delivered on that promise – *yet all this information is of no use to us unless we can find it and use it effectively.*

We're reaching critical mass with information. Unless we're willing to simply accept as inevitable the loss of all the potential value our abundance of information can provide, it's time for information workers to assert a few basic rights.

I. I should be able to access my information whenever I want to, wherever it is, wherever I am.

For many years, Microsoft's mission statement was "A computer on every desktop and in every home." Perhaps the most famous corporate mission statement of all time, it was a remarkable vision adopted many years ago when workplace computing was still largely the province of accountants and programmers, and home computers were underpowered playthings from Commodore and Atari. As the 20th century drew to a close, that vision had been largely realized so Microsoft adopted a new mission statement: "Empowering people through great software, any time, any place, and on any device." Software is just the toolset that lets us create and use information, of course, and the sentiment in these words – any time, any place, any device – amounts to a battle cry for all information workers.

The notion that devices like desktop computers, PDAs, wireless laptops, and even cell phones serve as windows onto a world of information is not a new one, but what is relatively new is the idea that we should be able to "see" the same information through each of these windows. If you create a file while sitting at your workstation at the office, you should be able to access the information in that file via your cell phone, your PDA, your computer at home, or a friend's laptop, whenever you want to and wherever you are.

II. Information is information. Don't distract me with structural details.

We're used to thinking about information in terms of files, directories, servers, and databases because that is the way information technology has always worked. Ten years ago, this rigidly hierarchical model tended to work pretty well for most people. Since then, however, the amount of information the average knowledge worker produces and consumes on a daily basis has grown exponentially, and the structural model of information storage is becoming a hindrance rather than a help. Your organization's most heavily used file servers may look more like Fibber McGee's legendary closet than neatly-organized collections of files and folders. It seems to take longer and longer all the

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Reducing Mailbox Sizes

The best type of training is one that produces results. For one client, a recent example of this translated into a significant reduction in risks and costs related to their Exchange servers.

At this client, maximum mailbox sizes were not strictly enforced resulting in over 17% of their mailboxes exceeding 500 MB in size, including over 40 mailboxes larger than 2 GB. They were facing a dire situation in which they either needed to reduce the information stores or add additional Exchange servers to avoid extreme risk to the system.

Trillium designed a two-hour “Managing Your Mailbox” workshop that provided users dedicated time to learn and apply a variety of methods for reducing the size of their mailbox folders. Because the users worked in their own mailboxes, the size reductions could be measured immediately. The IT department is thrilled with the results of the workshops, and is working with Trillium to design additional training to directly address other IT issues and concerns.

The workshops are also being embraced by the users. After attending, one director recommended the workshop to her entire department stating, “In the space of 2 hours, I reduced by size of my mailbox by 100 MB. You, too, will notice the difference!” ♦

An Information Worker’s Bill of Rights (cont’d.)

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time to store and retrieve the information you want – especially when it means choosing between two or more equally valid organization systems. (Did I save that letter in *My Documents\Correspondence\May2004* or *My Documents\May2004\Correspondence?*)

When you want to find a piece of information, you probably don’t care whether it lives on `\\corp-fileserv1` or `\\corp-fileserv2`, and you shouldn’t have to care. From the knowledge worker’s perspective, all information everywhere should live in a big bag, with every piece of data exactly as accessible as every other piece of data. When you reach into the bag to retrieve information, it should spontaneously organize itself based on criteria you define – and when you’re done with it, the organizational structure should just as quickly dissolve, the information staying in the bag ready to be organized along completely different lines by you or anyone else.

III. Information should never get “lost.”

An IT planning committee sits around a conference table discussing an ongoing hardware infrastructure upgrade project. It’s lagging behind schedule because knowledge about the corporate computing environment is scattered between different functional teams, and it hasn’t been easy to track down exactly who knows what.

“Didn’t we pay someone to compile this information a couple of years ago, the last time we went through this process?” asks one manager.

“I think we did,” replies another. “It wasn’t cheap. Does anyone know what happened to that report? Has anyone been making any effort to keep it up-to-date?” No one knows.

Information is an asset for any organization, just like a chair or a piece of equipment. When organizations invest in information assets that go unused because the people or groups who could make use of them can’t find them or don’t know they exist, that investment is lost.

You shouldn’t have to depend on your or someone else’s fortuitous recollection to make use of your organization’s information assets. You shouldn’t have to know ahead of time that they exist at all. You should be able to ask the computer to show you what it “knows” about the topic that interests you and have it present you with a white paper the St. Louis branch office drafted in the spring of 2001 that happens to be exactly what you need.

This “Bill of Rights” isn’t just a wish list for the future – there are tools available today, and more on the horizon, that can help us turn these rights into reality. In our next issue, we will examine some of these tools and see how they can make a difference for you. ♦

Managing a Wireless Network

Preparing Your Mobile Workers for a Wireless Solution

In our last issue, we introduced some of the factors to consider when building and managing a wireless network and securing its assets. We talk about a “wireless network” as if it were a single entity, but today’s wireless workers connect using a wide range of devices and technologies to perform many different job functions. It’s important to manage each method of access at an acceptable level of performance and security – which means managing not only connections and devices, but workers as well.

The Gartner Group has identified five different categories of wireless workers, each with its own set of tools and needs. Understanding these categories will help you help your workers get the most out of your wireless resources.

- *Alert workers* send and receive small amounts of information in short bursts, typically at unpredictable intervals. This group, which includes workers such as field service technicians and meter readers, made heavy use of alphanumeric pagers in the past, but is increasingly switching to cell phones using SMS (Short Message Service), a widely available system for transmitting short (160 characters or less) messages to and from mobile devices.
- *Message workers* make heavy use of wireless e-mail, typically through dedicated devices like the BlackBerry or through wireless Pocket PC or Palm PDAs. Typical users might include middle-to-upper management personnel.
- *Forms workers* use “clipboard replacement” devices like Tablet PCs to fill out electronic forms and transmit data to and from the network. A typical forms worker might be involved in inventory tracking in a large warehouse.
- *Knowledge workers* typically use laptops to perform various computing tasks, and connect to the network from time to time to transfer files or check e-mail. Knowledge workers who stick close to one or more WiFi base stations can connect using relatively inexpensive WiFi PC cards; those who need to connect from “the field” are best served by connecting their laptops to cell phones or other devices that employ GPRS (General Packet Radio Service), which uses the cellular network to transmit data at modem speeds.
- *Power workers* connect to the network for extended periods and require a desktop-like level of performance. Knowledge workers make heavy use of WiFi and GPRS, and will be among the first users of high-speed, 3rd generation (3G) wireless technology when it becomes widely available.

The first step in preparing workers to go wireless, then, is determining which category is most appropriate for each user. This process requires balancing implementation and support costs with workers’ business needs. Is your IT department willing and able to support all five categories of workers, or can some be omitted? What can your IT department do to minimize implementation and support costs without depriving users of needed functionality?

Worker training is another important consideration, and only promises to become more so as more technology choices become available. Wireless technology, which depends on unpredictable factors like atmospheric conditions and frequency availability, will likely never be as easy to use as a traditional wired Ethernet LAN; wireless workers will not have the luxury of remaining blissfully ignorant of the details of their network connections. Add issues like security and virus protection to the mix, and the need for a comprehensive and effective worker training program becomes clear.

The increased availability of wireless technology and the proliferation of devices that can be used to connect to a network have opened up many new possibilities for remote computing, but at least one thing hasn’t changed: workers need access to the appropriate tools and knowledge about how to use them, and understanding these needs can lead directly to increased productivity for any organization. ♦

Creating Business Diagrams in Visio

We heard you! Many of our clients said they wanted more real-world, user-focused Visio curriculum. We had purchased third-party Visio manuals that just didn't hit the mark – so we wrote our own.

Introducing “*Working with Business Diagrams*” in Visio (for 2002 or 2003). In our new Working with Business Diagrams class, we lay the foundation for building any type of connected drawing, with specific sections dedicated to creating flowcharts and organization charts.

As with our entire curriculum, our Working with Business Diagrams in Visio manual is modular and flexible, allowing us to customize class content to address specific business needs and existing skill sets.

The class, for example, can be an all-day introduction, a half-day focused on basic diagrams and flow charts, or a 2-hour session on organization charts for experienced users.

The response from our clients, students, and instructors has been phenomenal. We have heard high levels of praise for the practical, business, diagram-specific focus of this new course.

For more information or an outline of the “Working with Business Diagrams” course, or to schedule an on-site class, please see our web site or contact us by phone or e-mail at the address shown below. ♦

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Trillium Consulting
(425) 957-4649
1 (800) 844-1450
trillium@trilliumconsulting.com
www.trilliumconsulting.com