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*Serving your
 technology needs*

MAPSCO Switches From DSL to T1

By
 Daniel Fletcher



MAPSCO (Magnetic & Penetrant Services Co), located in the South Park neighborhood of Seattle, has been providing metal finishing and non-destructive inspection services for nearly 30 years, and

has been a BK Business Systems client for 5 years. They employ over 140 full-time employees. Many industries use metal finishing in their manufacturing processes including automotive, electronics, aerospace, hardware, jewelry, heavy equipment, appliances, tires, and telecommunications. MAPSCO's customers are primarily related to aerospace.

Why is metal finishing important to industry? Without metal finishing, products made from metals would last only a fraction of their present lifespan because of corrosion and wear. Finishing is also used to enhance electrical properties, to form and shape components, and to enhance the bonding of adhesives or organic coatings. Sometimes the finishes are used to meet consumer demand for a decorative appearance.

MAPSCO uses a variety of materials and processes to clean, etch, and plate metallic and non-metallic surfaces to create a work piece that has desired surface characteristics. Overall, metal finishing alters the surface of metal products to enhance:

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| * Corrosion resistance | * Wear resistance |
| * Electrical conductivity | * Electrical resistance |
| * Reflectivity and appearance (e.g., brightness or color) | * Torque tolerance |
| * Tarnish resistance | * Chemical resistance |
| * Ability to bond to rubber (e.g., vulcanizing) | * Hardness |

Cbeyond, as we shared with you in our spring



newsletter, is a national telephony company that provides services that run across local copper telephone wire. These services include voice and broadband, mobile, messaging and collaboration, data backup and security, and marketing services.

Rick Reese, IT manager at MAPSCO, has been concerned for some time about the slow (average 600 Kbs) data speed of their DSL line. DSL speed tends to slow down as distance from the central telephone office increases. MAPSCO is located a long distance away from their central office, so their data speed is significantly degraded. Since the problem is a function of the DSL line itself, MAPSCO is unable internally to enhance its performance.

As part of researching a new plan option offered by Quest, he contacted our lead technician, Dan Smith, to see if we had any suggestions. We introduced Rick to Andre Rincon, Cbeyond's Channel Manager, who suggested that MAPSCO convert their telephone lines to T1. T1 is a different type of broadband system. It normally runs at slower speeds than DSL (T1 runs up to 1.5 Mbs, while DSL runs up to 7Mbs—Editor). However, in MAPSCO's situation, T1 runs about twice as fast as DSL.

Cbeyond's T1 solution provides not only faster download speed, but also several additional incoming phone lines. At this time, the download speed at MAPSCO is averaging about 1.4 Mbs — an 800 Kbs improvement!

The conversion was completed without any business disruption toward the end of June. All three of the companies involved have been pleased with the result. Rick at MAPSCO says "I have noticed an improvement in access time and reduced times for downloads. I appreciate your efforts. Hopefully we will be able to take

advantage of the additional incoming lines soon." Andre at Cbeyond says "I enjoyed the personal consultative environment" surrounding the conversion. As for BK, we appreciate the level of mutual trust undergirding this project, and the opportunity to provide an additional level of service to a valued client. Thank you MAPSCO and Cbeyond!

What is your gamePLAN?

By
Barrett Knudsen

Apparently, even in the midst of this lousy economy, the technology industry is doing OK. Intel and Microsoft just came out with excellent earnings. Here at BK Business Systems, we're doing OK helping companies keep their (often aging) computer systems chugging along until such time as they can afford the newer systems they so badly need.

What we're being told in industry publications, in local and national newspapers, and other publications, is that both Intel and Microsoft are benefitting from companies replacing their aging file servers. Microsoft is also being benefitted by companies that are buying the new Windows 7 operating system after having mostly skipped the Vista generation fiasco.

And, indeed, many of our clients are typical of this kind of situation across the country. Business have become so dependent on computers that they just simply have to keep them going. You need a gamePLAN to do so. We just helped a client to repair an aging file server they can't afford to replace. We're helping another client to develop a dependable backup plan as we also help them to nurse along their very old servers. These are definitely tough times.

Caught between a rock and a hard place? What is your technology game-PLAN?



In some cases, companies have no choice but to replace their aging computer systems. We serve the auto body industry which has been hard hit by the (1 ½ but not quite double dip) recession. Unfortunately, not only does the bad economy make it financially challenging to replace aging servers, but auto body applications software is not quite ready to operate properly on newer server operating systems. So we're looking at virtual technologies to help the shops run their older applications in virtual mode on a new server. By upgrading to the latest server technology, they can also accommodate their need for additional storage capacity and speed.

To do this, shops need to be thinking proactively. Virtual technology is the latest Microsoft solution for more affordable hardware, and we should take advantage of it. From a layman's standpoint, it means you can save on costly file server hardware by running multiple server operating systems on one piece of hardware. So, you can buy a new server with expanded disk capacity, a faster (presumably Intel) processor, and faster memory; and then move onto that new server the applications that are capable of running on it. You can then essentially take your old server environment off of its aging hardware and run it on a virtual server on the new server hardware with the new server operating system.

If you don't already have a technology gamePLAN, give me a call at 206-246-2525 and we'll sit down and help you work one out.

Office Features

By
Daniel Fletcher

Office 2010 is finally here - and with some cool new features! I plan to highlight some of these features in my new column cleverly called **Office Features**. Along with a description of the feature, placed in a context of historical challenges, I will also provide directions regarding the commands needed to launch the feature. This installment will target the new "Clean Up" feature in Outlook.

A whole bunch of us live in Outlook (when we're not on a social networking site). We

communicate, schedule, plan, access our address book, and also other Office programs - all from Outlook. Does this sound familiar? We start Outlook as soon as we come into the office in the morning, work in it all day, and close it just before leaving. Some of us then reopen it on our personal computer in the evening as we extend our workday.

One of the ongoing challenges for those of us who use Outlook extensively has been how to manage the heavy e-mail traffic. Microsoft has addressed this challenge in recent versions, providing a variety of tools to support this management necessity. We have appreciated the spam filter and the Explore style folder structure provided in recent versions, but some challenges remain.

The challenge Microsoft fixes in Outlook 2010 has to do with Reply strings. Most of my emails consist of continuing dialog strings. Some of these strings reverberate for days or weeks. Every time the string bounces back with a reply, the whole string comes with it. I soon have to contend with a huge amount of copied and recopied emails clogging up my saved folder or inbox. Prior to 2010, some of my worst Outlook memories cluster around manual "search & destroy" missions trying (with mixed results) to clean up my folders.

Accessing this feature is simple. Click on the **View** Tab on the Ribbon. In the **Conversations** group, place a check in the box by "Show as Conversations". The "Conversation Settings" options (located directly under the "Show" command in the Conversations group) will allow you to choose a view to your liking. All of the continuing dialog iterations will be placed under a heading line in the work area. Right-click the heading and select "Clean Up". All of the recopied emails will be deleted. You will retain only the most recent string, with all the replies intact.

Microsoft Office, including Outlook, is becoming more flexible and collaborative with each update. As the Office/SharePoint interface becomes deeper, Outlook management will probably become even more important. Thank you, Microsoft, for continuing to provide the tools needed to keep Outlook lean and productive.

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