

THE **TELEWORKER**

A Publication of the Telework ExchangeSM www.teleworkexchange.com October 2005 **FREE**

Telework Doesn't Always Mean "Work from Home"



When you hear about teleworking, you generally think of people sitting at desks in their homes. If you are disciplined with your time, and your house has the technology to support the work, that's a great option.

But what about those of us who still prefer an office setting, or who just do not have the computer equipment necessary to create a home office? No need to despair. The Washington Metropolitan area has 14 Federal telework centers that can get you to work...and keep you closer to home.

Jennifer Alcott manages three of these centers along Virginia's I-95 corridor. She is the Program Director of the Fredericksburg Regional/Woodbridge Telework Centers, and she directs the centers in Stafford, Fredericksburg, and Woodbridge. Alcott describes a Federal telework center as "a multi-user facility that has all the amenities of a regular office, yet allows Federal employees to work closer to home and avoid the long commute to the main office."

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Federal Government Officials Urge Americans to Conserve Gas — Telework a Must

There are growing concerns over the debilitated American energy supply chain and production infrastructure. In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, consumers are seeing significant price increases for gasoline and limited availability of petroleum products across the U.S. In response, President Bush has asked Americans to conserve — "Don't buy gas if you don't need it."

National gas prices have surged through the \$3 per gallon mark, and in some Southeastern states, spot prices are over \$5 per gallon. The urgent need to conserve fuel for the national benefit clearly has pushed teleworking to the forefront as a viable option for much of the nation's workforce.

By teleworking, even one or two days per week, Americans can significantly

reduce the strain on the national fuel reserves. Teleworking also decreases traffic congestion, limits wear and tear on public transportation, as well as reduces pollution. On a personal level, teleworkers spend less time in traffic, have a better work/life balance, and generally have more time to focus on work tasks without interruption. Government managers can appreciate the benefits of business continuity that teleworking allows — employees can work from wherever they are located, despite inclement weather, and natural or manmade disasters.

Working remotely — from home, at a telework center, or in space at another agency facility — enables government

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Labor Optimizes Productivity: Telework Empowers the Distributed Workforce

In early 2003, if you worked for the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and were on travel, it was virtually impossible to connect with the office network. There were two servers accessible through dial-up connections — one in Arlington, Virginia and one in Denver, Colorado — and many employees had faster Internet connections from home. Both MSHA managers and mine inspectors were less than happy with dial-up performance.

Recognizing the inconvenience, the agency began to allow employees to work using

their home connections. For security reasons, only network administrators and managers were approved to use this access approach — fewer than 20 employees. The arrangement caused a significant increase in network security and administration headaches for MSHA network staff, as teleworkers' home computers had to be individually configured, help desk calls increased, and the network management issues soon became a drain on resources.

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Telework Milestones

For more than 20 years, Federal government officials have been discussing telework options, alternatives, and strategies. Only in the past five years have technology, traffic, and talent converged to make these concepts a reality for many government employees, managers, and their constituents.

October 23, 2000: Section 359 passes, requiring agencies to establish policies so that eligible workers can telework, yet maintain performance standards. The law says that within six months, the mandates should be applied to 25 percent of the Federal workforce, and an additional 25 percent each year thereafter.

February 9, 2001: OPM offers guidance to executive agency and department heads to help them comply with the telework laws.

1995	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003
	October 21, 1998: The Federal government mandates at least \$50,000 be appropriated to each executive agency for teleworking expenses.		2001: Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reports that 53,389 Federal employees are teleworking.	2002: OPM reports that 625,313 Federal employees (35 percent of the Federal workforce) are eligible to telework.	
November 19, 1995: Legislation passes that allows government funds to help equip Federal employee homes with necessary teleworking equipment.					2003: OPM reports that 751,844 Federal employees (43 percent of the Federal workforce) are eligible to telework.

Office, Sweet Office

In a Knowledge Economy, the Office Is Where Your Head Is

By Tom Simmons, Citrix Systems, Inc.

The word ‘office’ does not have its origins in a physical place assigned to a geographic location, but rather in an individual entrusted with a task. In fact, the root Latin word “Officium” has various meanings, including service, sense of duty, courtesy, and ceremony. None of these original meanings incorporate a description of a building with desks, a network printer, and a water cooler. Despite their extensive roadwork, it seems, the Romans hated commuting as much as we do.

Through progress and the march of ages, “office” has morphed into a term that includes the place where work — broadly defined — is done. When computers filled rooms and the cost of a copy machine was equal to or greater than the cost of an automobile, sharing a single place of production made good business sense. One office made it possible for an organization to empower a large number of individuals with productivity tools, collaborative interactions, shared information sources, and supervision to drive the best return with the smallest possible investment.

Technology has now eliminated this requirement for the office as a single place. The office is now wherever an individual is — home, hotel, or airport. The compelling values of an office — economies of scale, collaboration, shared information, and supervision — are actually more expensive now to deliver in one place than in many. Add in the environmental, infrastructure, and social costs borne by the general public and the costs associated with an office increase even more.

The tools required to significantly reduce office infrastructure are already in place. Nearly all shared information sources are now accessed via the computer and the Internet — when was the last time that you walked down to your office resource center and cracked a book? Remote access and collaboration technologies are already in their third or fourth generations, with a large number of options and approaches available to meet even the most demanding environments. The only missing piece in the puzzle is the question of supervision, although this always has been a people problem that must evolve with business requirements. Today’s advancements in access control policies — defining who gets access to what, and what they can do with it — is beginning to address that issue.

In the outsourced knowledge economy, a diminished reliance on office infrastructure is also economically rational. In an era where organizations can complete support calls and develop software in other countries, it seems logically flawed to believe that organizational managers cannot execute tasks in Dumfries, Virginia.

The tradeoff, is, of course, accepting a more personal association with our work. When we return to “being the office” as opposed to “going to the office,” the responsibility for both success and failure is associated directly with one person — no matter where they are. But, sandwiched between my BlackBerry and a cell phone, I do not really see how that would make telecommuting tomorrow any different than today.



Q: *Is anyone reading this allowed to use remote access software (PCAnywhere or GoToMyPC)? I noticed that several Federal agencies use the software, but my agency won't allow it.*

A: *Each agency sets its own policies for connectivity and the use of remote access software. These policies vary, based on an agency's mission, the complexity of its network, and other factors. Each agency has a Telework Coordinator responsible for supporting its employees. Although not all coordinators are technical staff, they can help you identify and contact the right people to find answers to your questions. Go to www.telework.gov and click on “Agency Telework Coordinators” to get started.*

Each issue of *The Teleworker* will highlight a question from the Web site's Water Cooler. To see other topics, ask questions, or share with your peers, visit the Telework Exchange Water Cooler at www.teleworkexchange.com.

November 20, 2004: The omnibus spending bill approved by Congress withholds \$5 million from the budgets of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State, as well as the Small Business Administration and Securities and Exchange Commission until each ensures eligible employees are able to telework.

January 31, 2005: A CDW Government study of Federal employees finds that 49 percent of the workforce is either ineligible to telework or unsure if they are eligible.

June 16, 2005: Representative Frank Wolf (R-VA) adds a provision in the FY 2006 Science-State-Justice-Commerce (SSJC) Appropriations bill that requires a number of Federal agencies to prove more of their workers are teleworking or risk losing funding.

2004

2005

December 8, 2004: The Federal government requires agencies to provide quarterly telework progress reports to the Congressional Appropriations Committee, detailing the number of employees eligible versus the number actually teleworking. Each department or agency must designate a "telework coordinator" to oversee such programs.

April 5, 2005: With support from Karen Evans, Administrator of the Office of Electronic Government and Information Technology (IT) at the Office of Management and Budget, the Telework Exchange, an online community focused on eliminating telework gridlock, was launched.

September 14, 2005: Government Accountability Office reviewed telework methodologies of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State, as well as the Small Business Administration and Securities and Exchange Commission. Agencies met the FY 2006 SSJC Appropriations bill requirements.

Pocket PC Police

Handheld computers are more than just cool gadgets these days. If you telework, or travel regularly, chances are you either have one or have thought about purchasing one. Handheld computers have become a common sight no matter where you work, and have become very popular with government employees. Still, there are lingering concerns — just how secure are they?

Cyber-based attacks present a real threat to our national security — they have the potential to interrupt critical communications, transportation, and many other vital services. Yesterday's hackers have been replaced by cyber-criminals determined to steal classified and other sensitive information. For Federal handheld users, the issues of security and user validation are issues of privacy protection and national security.

Regulations Straight from the Top

On August 27, 2004, President George W. Bush signed Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12). If you use a handheld device to stay in touch with the office, this Directive will no doubt affect *how* you do that. It demands additional security for all access to government facilities and information — including handhelds.

HSPD-12 calls for "a mandatory, government-wide standard for secure and reliable forms of identification." All executive departments and agencies must "require the use of identification by Federal employees and contractors that meets the standard in gaining physical access to Federally-controlled facilities and logical access to government information systems."

The Standards to Meet

Since then, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has developed the standard all agencies must adopt. It's called Personal Identity Verification (PIV) Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 201.

FIPS 201 lays out the technical requirements all Federal employees

and contractors will follow to ensure a common identification standard. Anyone trying to enter a Federal facility, or access one of its information systems, soon can only do that if he or she adheres to this standard.

And just *how* will they do it? NIST created a common smart card-based platform that applies across Federal agencies, and for all physical and logical access.

The Timeline

The mandated deadlines are tight. In June 2005, all executive departments and agencies should have a plan to show how they will comply with the mandates. By October 2006, those plans should all be in effect, and all Federal employees and long-term contractors should be issued new ID cards.

Help for Handhelds

To comply with the new standards, handheld users are looking to a technology called "validation authority" for solutions. With this technology, you can validate the status of a digital certificate. That means you can confirm the identity of the person you are communicating to, and ensure the messages you are sending back and forth are reaching the intended person, with the original message intact.

Take this new technology, add a common access card reader, and you have a handheld that is every bit as secure as your office desktop computer. So, go ahead — check your e-mail from wherever you are working.

For more information on HSPD-12, visit: <http://csrc.nist.gov/policies/Presidential-Directive-Hspd-12.html>.



/// Therefore, I hereby direct the heads of executive departments and agencies to take appropriate actions to conserve natural gas, electricity, gasoline, and diesel fuel to the maximum extent consistent with the effective discharge of public responsibilities. All agencies should conserve fuel so we can reduce overall demand and allow extra supplies to be directed towards the hurricane relief effort. In particular, agencies should temporarily curtail non-essential travel and other activities that use gasoline or diesel fuel, and encourage employees to carpool, telecommute, and use public transportation to reduce fuel use. **///**

— President George W. Bush
September 26, 2005
Memorandum for the Heads of
Executive Departments and Agencies

Federal Government Officials Urge Americans to Conserve Gas — Telework a Must

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employees to avoid traveling excessive distances to and from work on a daily basis. Reducing travel saves time, money, fuel, and the environment. Given these tangible benefits — perhaps most importantly, the positive impact on national energy resources — the time is ideal for government employers and their staffs to consider telework options that will support their missions.

How much can you save? Visit www.teleworkexchange.com to calculate your potential savings based on your vehicle type, commute frequency, and distance traveled with each trip to your current workplace. You will be surprised at the results and may refocus your thinking about your telework options.

Example of Telework Savings

A Federal government employee living in the Winchester, Virginia area may be able to work periodically at the GSA-sponsored Winchester Telework Center or from home. By doing so, this teleworker would eliminate a 140 mile roundtrip drive to Washington, D.C., and the cost and productivity savings potential is enormous. An average commuter driving from Winchester, Virginia in a sedan can save up to \$25,000 per year*, avoid dispersion of 18 tons of pollutants into the environment per year, and save 4.8 gallons of gas per day.

*Potential cost savings to individual workers includes fuel, vehicle maintenance and depreciation, travel time, parking/tolls, and other costs associated with commuting.

Study Says, "It's No Gas"

"It's No Gas Study" Shows \$5.7 Million Hike in Federal Employee and \$105.8 Million Hike in White-Collar America Daily Commuting Costs

The Telework Exchange recently released a study, "Fuel Smart Economy: It's No Gas," focused on fuel conservation and telework awareness. With East Coast gas prices surging from an average of \$2.14 per gallon in April to \$3.05 per gallon in September, the increased urgency to conserve fuel has pushed teleworking to the forefront

as an imperative operating model for the Federal government as well as the American workforce as a whole.

"Fuel Smart Economy: It's No Gas" study findings include:

Total spent on commuting to/from work every business day (up 42 percent since April 2005):

- Federal government workforce – \$19 million
- Entire U.S. white-collar workforce – \$355.8 million

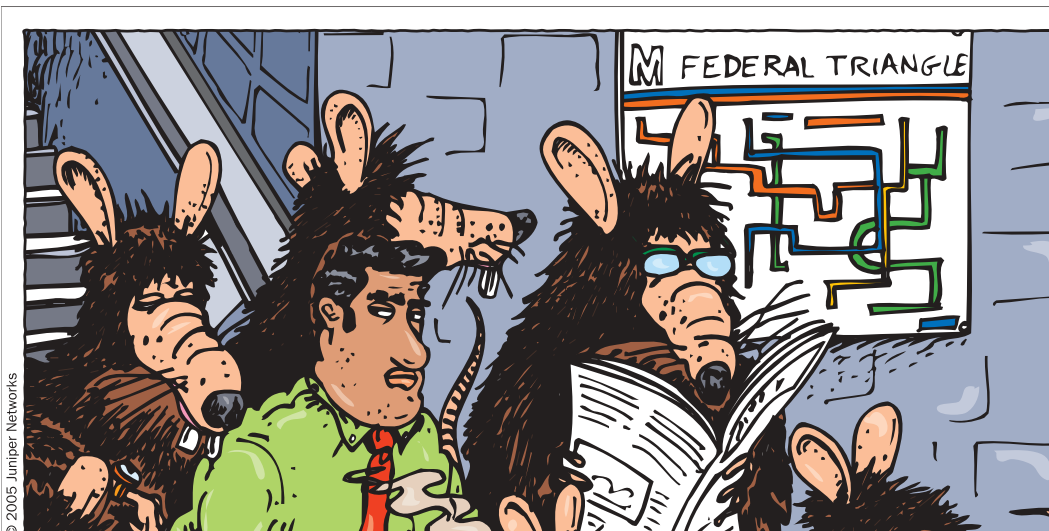
Fuel consumed each week by commuters:

- Federal government workforce – 31.1 million gallons
- Entire U.S. white-collar workforce – 583.3 million gallons

Fuel that could be conserved each week by teleworking just two days:

- Federal government workforce – 12.4 million gallons
- Entire U.S. white-collar workforce – 233.3 million gallons

To download the full study results, visit www.teleworkexchange.com.



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And when Alcott says "all the amenities of a regular office," she means it. In all Federal telework centers, you will find computers, high speed Internet connectivity, faxes, printers, kitchens, as well as a phone number and voice mail service for each telework center user.

The average setup in a center is 25 workstations, with private and semi-private areas. Some centers have conference rooms, others have video teleconferencing capability. If you prefer to use your own laptop versus a desktop, the centers can accommodate you.

Sounds great, yes? You might think there would be a line at the door to get into one of these centers. Not true. "In the whole metro region, we are only at about 55 percent capacity," says Alcott. "The Federal government is not in compliance with the law on teleworking. If it were, all the centers would be full." Alcott cites a recent study out of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to back up her claim.

So, how does it all work? The centers are mainly funded through the General Services Administration (GSA), and GSA is reimbursed by the various agencies and departments whose employees use space in each telework center. (The Washington, D.C. center is privately-owned and -funded, and

"The Federal government is not in compliance with the law on teleworking. If it were, all the centers would be full." — Jennifer Alcott

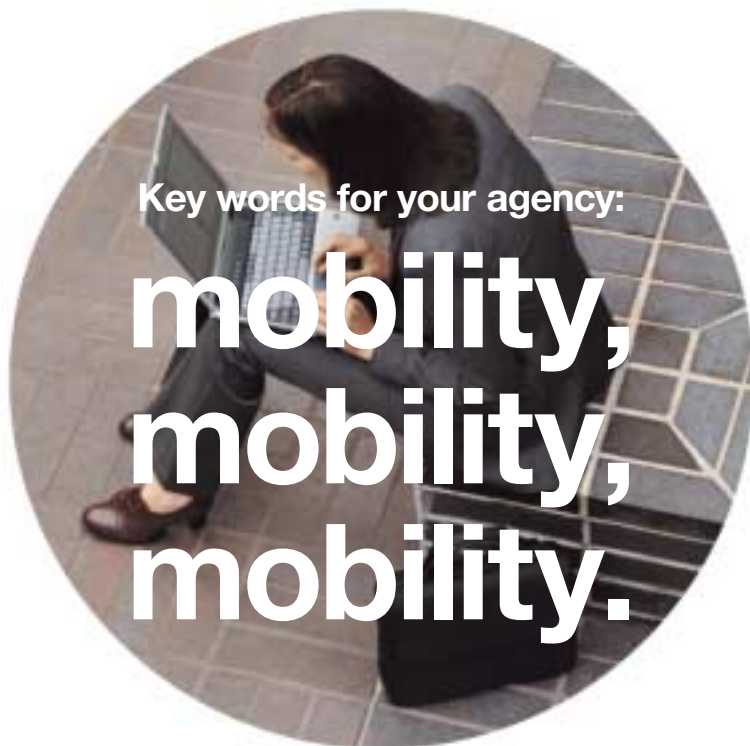
mainly available to executive-level employees.) The centers also welcome contractors working for the Federal government, although Alcott mentions that the fee structure is a bit different. (See www.telework.gov to check out details on center locations, Federal fee structures, and more.)

Alcott points out that each Federal agency is mandated to have a

telework coordinator (for a list, go to www.telework.gov). She stresses that Federal employees, and contractors, first need to talk to their immediate supervisors about teleworking options that best suit their work assignment and department mission.

Once you have agreed with your supervisor on a mutually-beneficial telework schedule, visit www.wmtc.org for a list of center managers, and contact the one that works best for you, often the one closest to your home. After that, it is just a matter of setting up an initial appointment and working out a schedule with that center's manager.

"Most teleworkers are here one or two days a week. Some are here every day, and some just twice a month. On an average day, we have 10 per center," says Alcott. Most teleworkers save themselves at least three hours of commuting time — some save up to six. In talking with her centers' teleworkers, Alcott has learned that they just want to be more productive. "They are focused on putting more energy into their jobs, not their commute," she says.



Maximum mobility equals maximum productivity. And Intel® Centrino™ mobile technology is designed from the ground up for mobile computing. It enables extended battery life in a new generation of thin, light, wireless laptops. And, Intel works closely with industry leaders to support a wide range of wireless security solutions. It's all about mobility. Unwire your agency at intel.com/go/government



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Labor Optimizes Productivity: Telework Empowers the Distributed Workforce

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In the spring of 2003, the MSHA embraced an Enterprise Architecture process to govern IT initiatives. The steering committee quickly identified improved remote access as the number-one priority for fiscal year 2004, and MSHA allocated its funding appropriately.

After careful analysis, MSHA chose to implement a Secure Socket Layer Virtual Private Network (SSL VPN) solution. Syed Hafeez, MSHA Information Security Officer, explained the attraction of the SSL VPN approach. "We were concerned about the potential danger involved in giving broadband remote access to our users from any unmanaged system that they requested," Hafeez said. "The costs involved in a network compromise under these circumstances caused us major anxiety." The SSL VPN allowed MSHA to put a device behind the corporate firewall that lets employees connect from any browser.

It was also critical that MSHA implement an SSL VPN security strategy that was compliant with Level 2 of the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 140-2. The agency conducted an extensive review of existing industry solutions that fit the bill. MSHA identified the Juniper Networks Secure Access 3000 as the best SSL VPN to meet its needs.

MSHA received the hardware in November 2004, and Juniper Networks provided on-site training. The agency began piloting the Secure Access 3000 in February this year, and as word spread, the test group quickly grew to more than 200 users eager to try out the new teleworking solution.

In April and May, MSHA implemented this remote access capability for all eligible employees — 2,200 users. Remote users have gained confidence in the solution, and they no longer wrestle with network latency and other issues that are typical of remote connections.

Early in the implementation, the SSL VPN solution demonstrated its ability to

be easily maintained. Remote users had to download a software patch so their machines could connect to the MSHA network. Before the SSL VPN solution, this type of system upgrade would have taken days to implement and required many help desk hours. With the Secure Access 3000 in place, every remote user was able to install the patch rapidly, without calling the help desk.

Although MSHA implemented the SSL VPN solution to improve security for remote access users, the agency soon began to realize additional benefits. Most notable among these is the ability to conduct virtual meetings among remote workers in a secure environment.

"An unexpected benefit of the Secure Access 3000 implementation is the ability to conduct secure, Web-based meetings across the enterprise," said George Fesak, MSHA Director of Program Evaluation and Information Resource. "MSHA's software development group has already used the appliance to demonstrate a new application to 32 agency users and managers across the nation."

With Juniper Networks SSL VPN in place, everyone benefits. MSHA employees have a secure and reliable remote network. Agency network administrators can easily maintain the network. The MSHA help desk support team can once again focus on solving agency-wide, rather than remote-only, problems. Most importantly, MSHA employees can work more efficiently to serve the American workforce.

Try a Telework Center for Free!



Flexible workspace available at the Woodbridge, VA Federal Telework Center

GSA-sponsored Washington Metropolitan Telework Centers are offering new users access to its regional telework centers for free through December 31, 2005. For current users, telework center use beyond their current commitment also will be offered at no additional charge to the host agency. For example, a Federal employee who currently works one day per week at a regional telework center may increase his or her center use each week for no additional fee through the end of the year. This offer is open to all Federal government employees and their supervisors. For more information on the centers, visit www.gsa.gov/telework.

Telework Centers in and around D.C.:

Virginia

- Fairfax
- Fredericksburg
- Herndon
- Manassas
- Stafford
- Winchester
- Woodbridge

Maryland

- Bowie
- Frederick
- Hagerstown
- Laurel Lakes
- Prince Frederick
- Waldorf

West Virginia

- Kearneysville

Washington, D.C.

- Executive Office Club (1025 Conn. Ave.)

For more information about these centers, visit www.wmtc.org.