

# Networking: 'Corridor Warriors'

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They are called "corridor warriors." They're the 21st century's revised version of "road warriors," those late-20th-century business professionals, last seen scurrying about airports, with mobile phones attached to their ears and laptop computers in their carry-on bags.

Corridor warriors, experts tell United Press International's Networking, are a more evolved species. These individuals strut around their own offices -- corridors and all -- with a wireless phone. They rarely work from their desk, preferring to use a PDA, even for intensive applications.

"The portability needs of corridor warriors and mobility needs of road warriors converge in the enterprise," said Cathy Zatloukal, president and chief executive officer of MobileAccess Networks, an enterprise networking firm based in Vienna, Va.

Workers in an array of industries -- financial services, high tech, manufacturing, government, sports and even healthcare -- are pushing their employers to purchase the technologies that enable them to say good-bye to their desks on a semi-permanent basis.

"Spending for wireless healthcare applications will reach \$7 billion by 2010," said John C. Williams, managing director, The FocalPointGroup, a research consultancy that recently produced a report called "Wireless Data in the Healthcare Arena."

But perhaps an even more telling sign of the new trend is the interest that

venture capitalists -- the famed money men who fueled the dot-com frenzy -- are showing in making offices completely wireless. Companies like MobileAccess have received \$40 million in funding recently from VCs, hoping to capitalize on the emerging trend of enterprise wireless networks.

Historically, businesses have installed separate networks for wireless and wired infrastructure. But the demands placed by corridor warriors, and would-be warriors, are making that old strategy costly and difficult to maintain, experts tell Networking.

"Organizations are increasingly aware of the need for a complete enterprise-wide wireless solution, especially one that can support multiple services and applications," said Zatloukal, indicating that this includes "seamless wireless connectivity" that "opens new channels of communication and easily scales to meet organizations' dynamic and evolving wireless requirements."

There is also a related trend -- the rebirth of branch offices -- that is fueling demand for wireless business networks. The industry consensus is that around 85 percent of today's workforce is remote, meaning that the workers toil at offices far from headquarters, at home, or perhaps a bit at both locales.

The trend also comes at a time when converged networks are making an appearance in the corporation -- networks that feature Internet, voice and video capability. Companies like Masergy, Tacit Networks, Certeon and others are working on solutions too.

To make sure that everyone has equally powerful network access, companies are installing Wide Area Networks and wireless WANs at branch offices as well as headquarters offices. Branch-office productivity is critical to the bottom line, and there have been concerns

in the past that these smaller offices did not receive the right technologies, experts tell Networking.

This is also stirring interest in so-called WAN Optimization technologies, and WAFS, or Wide Area File Services, offered by developers like Expand Networks and others.

To make sure the corridor and road warriors are productive -- and not, as they used to say, playing hooky -- companies are installing sophisticated software and hardware to monitor their work flow. "As a vendor of networking applications, we see an increased demand for network documentation tools," Tony Miller, marketing manager of Insightix Ltd., based in suburban Atlanta and with offices in Israel, told Networking. "IT managers are looking to automate and unify processes that were previously performed manually or by a patchwork of multiple systems in order to get a baseline of their network infrastructure."

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