

Artisoft TeleVantage 5

In late December Artisoft released version 5.0 of its flagship TeleVantage phone system. Since its introduction as the industry's first software-based phone system, TeleVantage has continued to set the standard with its robust feature set and future-proof architecture. With version 5, Artisoft greatly increases the scalability of the system, further enhances call center functionality, and improves administration and user productivity. For users with TeleVantage 3 or 4, version 5 is a simple software upgrade.

New Capabilities

The increased scalability of TeleVantage 5 allows anywhere from 8 to 480 phones and 4 to 192 phone lines. In addition the system now supports conferences of up to 60 users, eliminating the need for external conferencing services.

TeleVantage has always been able to use any analog phone, from basic handsets to wireless units and headsets, along with many ADSI feature phones and IP phones. TeleVantage 5 adds direct support for Toshiba digital handsets as well as Avaya, NEC, Nortel, or Siemens handsets via a gateway. In fact, users of Toshiba or ADSI phones can now receive pages or intercom calls, for single users or workgroups.

Another new feature in version 5 is tenant support. The system can track multiple user groups such as departments or organizations on just one server. This lets a property manager, for example, supply one phone system for the building while

Continued on page 3

E-Mail Etiquette

E-mail is essential to many businesses. However, the impersonal nature of the tool as a communications medium can result in employees forgetting classic business correspondence guidelines. While abbreviations, shorthand, lack of capitalization, and the like are fine for personal notes, a business should use e-mail as a way to enhance its image, not detract from it.

Keep Communication Businesslike

E-mail can be a permanent record, just like a paper memo. If you would not use a phrase or abbreviation in a letter, it should probably not be used in an e-mail communication. E-mail should be kept official and professional. Here are some tips:

- ◆ Always use the spell checker. Most programs can be set to automatically scan outgoing messages.
- ◆ Let the recipient know who you are. Set your e-mail program to use your name and optionally company as the "from" text.
- ◆ Start with a salutation, do not simply launch into your message. Do you normally start talking or do you say "hello" first?
- ◆ Use the same salutation (John, Ms. Smith, etc.) that you would use speaking with the recipient.
- ◆ Be concise. Some people receive hundreds of messages a day, and do not desire to read a novel.
- ◆ Separate paragraphs with a full line not just an indentation or tab. Whitespace tends to improve the readability of long messages.
- ◆ Avoid using all caps, unless YOU WANT TO SHOUT.

- ◆ Save "smiley" faces for personal messages.
- ◆ Do not overemphasize a point with extra punctuation.
- ◆ Do not overuse abbreviations or acronyms. Not everyone will understand shorthand such as "btw" (by the way), "fwiw" (for what it's worth) or "b4" (before), and using them does not improve readability or save much typing time.
- ◆ Use humor carefully, and avoid sarcasm. It is difficult to judge someone's mood in a written message which can easily be misinterpreted.
- ◆ Reread your message before sending it. This is a good time to fix grammatical errors or typos, and evaluate the tone of a message.

Avoid Attitude In Your Messages

Have you ever sent an e-mail message you wanted back? Recall the employee in a recent TV commercial. As he emotionally composes a nasty e-mail to his boss complaining as to why he cannot have a new laptop like everyone else, an IT staffer calmly sets up his new laptop on the desk behind him. The employee is left frantically searching for an "un-send" button.

Be careful of anger or a sharp retort. If you would not say something when talking to your recipient face-to-face, do not write it down.

Instead of firing off an emotionally charged (good or bad) e-mail, save the message as a draft. Most e-mail programs have a way to save a message in a "draft" folder, or select a "send later" option to leave it in your outbox.

Humans use facial expression, body
Continued on page 2

language, and vocal inflection to communicate, in addition to the words chosen. While e-mail has its advantages (convenience, efficiency, and speed), it lacks these personal elements. Be sure your recipient cannot misread your intentions when reading your message.

Favor Clarity Over Complication

The beauty of e-mail lies in its simplicity. Do not send HTML (formatted) e-mail unless you are sure the recipient's mail program can support it. If they cannot, they may simply receive a page or two of HTML code instead of your message. Unfortunately HTML is the default format for many programs, such as Outlook Express, however, users can usually set the program to send mail using plain text only.

Respond to an e-mail by including enough of the original message to indicate your response. Most e-mail programs can quote the original message in a reply, but they include the whole message. Avoid sending the entire original message back again with a small note at the bottom, especially to a mailing list, newsgroup, or large group. Instead remove the text to which you are not replying and make it more readable for everyone.

Send attachments only if the recipient is expecting it. With the explosion of e-mail viruses, some organizations simply do not allow incoming e-mail attachments. Many individuals will not even open an e-mail attachment to a message they are not expecting. In fact we consider this good practice...modern viruses can fake the "from" address of a message, making it look like friends or acquaintances are sending the infected message.

Taking a casual approach to serious business matters could cause communication of ideas and attitudes that confuse (or worse, offend) your clients or coworkers. Instead, take a moment to ensure you are projecting the desired image for your company.

Trends

Good-Bye Windows 98?

Days after our last issue went to press, Microsoft confirmed the next version of their Office suite will only be compatible with Windows 2000 Service Pack 3 or later, including Windows XP. Windows 98 and Windows Me users will have to upgrade in order to run Office 11, which in some cases might require a replacement PC.

Microsoft has announced plans to phase out support for older operating systems after seven years, supporting only the previous two versions of software. In fact, Windows 95 reached its "end of life" status at the end of 2002, while Windows 98 and Windows NT 4.0 will be completely unsupported as of June, 2004.

The timing of this shift towards the Windows 2000/XP platform is especially disappointing to larger businesses. Many opted to sign up for Microsoft's Software Assurance

program due to specials offered last summer, only to discover they must now upgrade all their older PCs to run the new version of Office, for which they have essentially already paid.

Microsoft claims the reason for the lack of support for older Windows versions is increased stability and security, as well as reduced development effort. Further, Office 11 is targeted towards midsize and larger businesses, which Microsoft believes are more likely using Windows 2000 or XP already.

Early feedback is that Microsoft's plan might backfire if companies decide to stick with Office XP rather than upgrade both Office and Windows at the same time when Office 11 is released later this year. Early reviews indicate there are few new features besides XML support, with most changes appearing as refinements to the interface.

Humor

Unfortunate Forecasts

by actual, real people

"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons."

Popular Mechanics, forecasting the relentless march of science, 1949

"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."

Thomas Watson, Chairman of IBM, 1943

"I have traveled the length and breadth of this country and talked with the best people, and I can assure you that data processing is a fad that won't last out the year."

The editor in charge of business books for Prentice Hall, 1957

"But what ... is it good for?"

Engineer at the Advanced Computing Systems Division of IBM, 1968, commenting on the microchip

"There is no reason anyone would

want a computer in their home."

Ken Olson, President, Chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Corp., 1977

"So we went to Atari and said, 'Hey, we've got this amazing thing, even built with some of your parts, and what do you think about funding us? Or we'll give it to you. We just want to do it...' And they said, 'No.' So then we went to Hewlett-Packard, and they said, 'Hey, we don't need you. You haven't got through college yet.'"

Apple Computer Inc. founder Steve Jobs on attempts to get Atari and HP interested in his and Steve Wozniak's personal computer.

"640K ought to be enough for anybody."

Bill Gates, 1981

Tips

Simplify Formulas in Microsoft Excel

One of the nice things about spreadsheets is the ability to create formulas referencing other cells. Excel offers several ways to improve the readability of formulas.

Named ranges. If your formulas are a mash of letters and numbers you will be happy to know you can name individual cells. For example, open a new spreadsheet and with cell A1 selected choose the *Insert/Name/Define...* menu item. Type *test* in the top box, and notice the bottom field refers to cell A1. Click OK to save.

Excel will now show the word "test" instead of "A1" in the upper left when cell A1 is selected. Select cell B1, type "=test+2" and hit *Enter* (you can also click on cell A1 instead of typing its name). Notice the formula for B1 shows the word "test" instead of the cell number.

Another benefit for those of you with large spreadsheets is that you can

use the pull down menu in the upper left of Excel's screen (where the cell number is shown) to quickly jump to the "test" cell. Typing a name and pressing *Enter* works as well.

Note when copying cell B1 to another cell, Excel keeps referencing the cell *test* instead of adjusting the reference as it would if you had referenced the cell using "A1." You no longer need to use the "\$A\$1" syntax. **Named constants.** Similarly, you can create a constant in Excel by using the same *Insert/Name/Define...* procedure and typing a number or text in the *Refers To...* area.

Easy named range creation. If you want to create multiple named ranges at once or would like to leave a label for the cells inside your spreadsheet, type the label into the adjacent cell. Select both and use *Insert/Name/Create...* to define the appropriate names for your cells.

Q & A

What is monitor "resolution?"

Resolution is the number of dots horizontally and vertically that are shown on the screen. Common sizes are 800x600, 640x480, 1024x768, etc.

Since it is independent of the monitor's actual picture area, a higher resolution shrinks the picture (an image 640 dots wide will just fill a 640x480 screen, but will only fill 640/1024ths of a 1024x768 screen). Larger monitors can be used when using higher resolutions to get the image back up to a size that can be seen easily. The reason people go to higher resolutions is that they can show more on the screen, for example more rows and columns of a spreadsheet.

Sometimes as the resolution increases, the video card and/or monitor may not be able to handle the higher number of dots and must slow down the refresh rate a bit to

accommodate. If the refresh rate drops far enough, users see this as "flicker." Most newer computers and monitors can handle high refresh rates with no problem, but less expensive monitors or video cards may not be able to handle the higher resolutions as well. Since fluorescent lights operate at 60 Hz most users see flicker with a refresh rate of 60 Hz. When shopping for a new system we recommend getting one that can handle refresh rates of 72 Hz or higher for your preferred resolution size.

Note that LCD, or "flat," monitors are a different game entirely. They have a fixed number of dots, and thus an optimal resolution. Changing resolutions on an LCD monitor often yields a "fuzzy" look as the monitor tries to adapt. Users who prefer a larger image for clearer viewing may prefer a traditional monitor instead.

Artisoft TeleVantage 5
...continued from page 1

providing separate auto attendants, dial by name directories, and call tracking for each tenant.

For organizations with users who roam throughout an office, changing desks or departments, TeleVantage now allows them to log in and their phone settings will follow them around. Caller ID is now configurable on a per-user basis as well, allowing remote users to call back using a DID (direct inward dialing) number.

TeleVantage 5 can call remote users to announce when a new or urgent voice mail message has been received, and allow them to listen to the message and even return the call. If the caller is in the TeleVantage contact database, the system will provide a choice of any known numbers to use for returning a call.

Call Center Features

Artisoft has improved the outbound call center functionality to compare with that for inbound calls, allowing TeleVantage to function for both inbound and outbound call centers at the same time. Features such as call recording, wrap-up time, and real-time statistics allow administrators to optimize agents' time.

For busy inbound call queues, TeleVantage allows callers to be redirected to voice mail, or overflow agents or queues, even at a remote location.

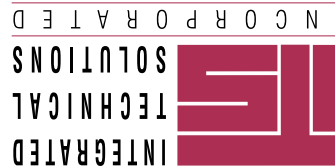
Supervisors can now coach or silently monitor agents using any handset (or headset), freeing them from being tied to a desk while monitoring.

Application Interaction

TeleVantage 5's built-in IVR toolkit allows developers to interface applications with the phone system using Visual Basic or other development tools, for example allowing prompts for customer information or to provide automated order status. The SMDR service provides other utilities real-time call details.

FIRST QUARTER 2003

ITS is a trademark of Integrated Technical Solutions, Inc. All articles Copyright © 2003 Integrated Technical Solutions, Inc., all rights reserved.



Please give us a call to arrange a free initial consultation!

- **Network design, installation, and support**
- **Internet web site hosting, design, & high speed connections**
- **Software-PBX phone systems**
- **Network and phone wiring installation and testing**
- **Troubleshooting, diagnosis, and repair**
- **Evaluation of business needs**
- **Evaluation and recommendation of technical alternatives**
- **System design and implementation**
- **Emergency service**

To contact us...

phone: 630.420.2550

fax: 630.420.2771

e-mail: its@teamITS.com

web site: www.teamITS.com

address:

1555 Naperville/Wheaton Road

Suite 107

Naperville, IL 60563

For a free subscription or to

submit questions for the Q&A

section, visit our web site:

www.teamITS.com/connection