

Codex Brings Its Global Network to Every Macintosh User's Desk

Company Background

A subsidiary of Motorola, Codex Corporation manufactures data communications equipment and wide area network management systems. As a supplier of network solutions worldwide, Codex appreciates the importance of providing users with cost effective and efficient networking capabilities. Because its 3900 employees work at 69 direct sales and support offices on different continents, the company needed a cohesive network that would allow everyone to access E-mail services and corporate computing resources at its headquarters in Mansfield, Massachusetts.

Macintosh Solution

Codex has 2200 Apple Macintosh personal computers, each of which can access the company's Digital VAX minicomputers and IBM 3084 mainframe. According to principal communications specialist Robert Picchione, "We have one big network -- that's the way we put it across to our users. We're gradually migrating to a more distributed processing environment, with Macintosh systems being the first step.

"Our decision to standardize on the Macintosh means users can access all key information systems in our organization: IBM mainframes, VAX minicomputers, and other Macintosh computers. In addition, the ease of use of the Macintosh has enabled individual departments to develop their own applications for mainframe access."

Worldwide Sites Connected

Internationally, satellite offices in each country are connected to that country's main office using Codex-manufactured X.25 or 19.2 Kbps dial-up connections. The main offices, in turn, are connected to Codex headquarters using a subchannel of Motorola's worldwide T-1 and satellite network. The company's nine buildings in two Massachusetts cities are connected by voice and data T-1 lines, with plans to upgrade the main trunks of its network to digital service, providing speeds of 56 Kbps.

Electronic Mail and File Sharing

According to Picchione, "The Macintosh has improved the ability of people separated by wide distances to communicate."

Access to the global Codex network is transparent to users with Macintosh computers.

Case History

To enable the company's 2000 E-mail users to be more productive, Codex has installed 50 Macintosh II computers throughout the world—one at each major site—as dedicated Microsoft Mail servers. The local server sends the mail to the remote server automatically, freeing users from having to wait for low-speed telecommunications between countries.

To transfer large files, Codex uses AppleShare file servers. “We’re discovering the advantages of AppleShare as an information distribution medium,” says Picchione. “Because the Codex network is so large, it is often more practical to post service bulletins on the server instead of using E-mail.” The corporate library uses AppleShare as a bulletin board, posting company news briefs.

Other Macintosh-to-Host Applications

Macintosh users at Codex can use network gateways to access databases and use the customer service application on VAX minicomputers, or they can connect to the mainframe to use the company's order entry system.

In addition, departments have developed special Macintosh-to-mainframe applications. For example, the sales department has written an application using ACIUS 4th DIMENSION and a terminal emulation program to download product information and to allow salespeople in remote offices to access shipping schedules. The benefits are more accurate information for customers, fewer backlogged orders, and better customer service.

Macintosh: Changing the Way People Work

Picchione notes, “Our users are becoming more aware of the benefits of the Macintosh: the ease of sending electronic mail, exchanging files, figuring out applications for their own departments. The Macintosh has changed the culture of the company—it’s changed the way people work. When you’re in IS, it’s gratifying when people tell you that they can now do things they wouldn’t have considered without the Macintosh.”