

Wireless Panel Research

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Remote access survey summary

Remote Access Over Wireless Data Networks is On the Rise

Remote access has become extremely important over the past several years, as the number of telecommuters, remote office workers and business travelers has continued to increase. End-users need the ability to access corporate computers and networks to be efficient. Most remote access, today, is conducted over wireline communications, such as analog dialup, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), and cable modem service. While these services are very beneficial to remote access workers who might be in a branch or home office, they do not meet the needs of users who travel. When not near a wireline connection (such as in a hotel room), these workers require wireless connections provided by wireless WAN and public wireless LAN (hotspot – 802.11) data services. These services can also be used in place of these other wireline communications services.

Although still limited today, usage of wireless data services (including both cellular and hotspot services) to remotely access corporate computers and networks is steadily growing. In-Stat/MDR recently surveyed nearly 500 members of its Technology Adoption Panel (TAP) who access or plan to access corporate computers and networks wirelessly. Some of the key findings include:

- About half of respondents to the survey currently access wireless WAN data services and many respondents also use their devices to access public wireless Local Area Network (LAN)/hotspot data services – especially users of Pocket PC-based PDAs and notebook computers. This usage illustrates that these markets are peacefully coexisting, and while these services may be competing in some instances, for the most part, users view them as complementary and select the best service based on need and availability at any given time.
- Laptops and notebooks are becoming the preferred devices to access data wirelessly, displacing cellular phones as the most popular access device.
- Frequency of access varies significantly by type of equipment. Depending on the device, respondents estimate that they access the Internet wirelessly somewhere between eight and 24 times per month. Frequency of use, in terms of number of sessions, decreased over the past year, while duration of sessions has increased.
- The two most common applications accessed wirelessly include e-mail and the Internet/World Wide Web.
- About half of respondents use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to wirelessly access corporate computers and networks; however, they do not use the VPN at all times.
- The amount of data that users upload and download is increasing from year to year. On average, respondents estimate that they upload about 37 MBs of data and download approximately 49 MBs of data, per month. Users of laptops with wireless PC cards tend to upload and download the most data. Data “consumption” is growing to feed the need for bandwidth-hungry multimedia applications such as MP3 files, JPEGs (pictures from camera phones), Powerpoint files, and others.

- Given a list of potential Voice Over IP (VoIP) applications, respondents express the most interest in making voice calls from their notebook computer. This is becoming possible as wireless carriers transition their networks to IP-based technology.
- Respondents' wireless data bills average \$50 per month – the same amount as last year. Companies typically receive and pay for users' wireless data bills. The majority of respondents are on “all-you-can-eat” plans. In-Stat/MDR expects to see decreasing wireless WAN data service prices over the next year, which will further stimulate adoption in 2005, helping to move the market beyond its “early adopter” status.

About the Panel

In-Stat/MDR's Technology Adoption Panel (TAP) is a dynamic online group of thousands of technology users and decision-makers interested in contributing opinions and insights about technology usage and issues in the workplace. The panel is recruited from many different sources and comprises a diverse group, representing a wide range of company sizes, industries, and expertise. Members are typically early adopters of technology, and are more representative of the business market than the consumer market. In-Stat/MDR's Wireless Panel is a sub-segment of the TAP. Members of the panel are required to use a wireless handset.

Data for this report was collected via a brief Internet survey. Participants — members of In-Stat/MDR's Technology Adoption Panel — were e-mailed invitations to participate in a Web-based survey conducted from April 26th – 30th, 2004. The survey was focused on wireless remote access and took about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Respondents were required to either currently use wireless Wide Area Network (WAN) data services, or had to be planning or evaluating implementation within the next 12 months to complete the survey. Wireless data was explained as having access to e-mail, corporate networks, intranets and the Internet over a wireless wide area network (e.g., cellular). Responses from 491 people are included in this research. If you are interested in joining the Technology Adoption Panel and/or learning more about it, please go to <http://www.instat.com/panels>.

Which of the following describes your current use or plans to use wireless wide area network (WAN) data services? By wireless data, we mean access to e-mail, corporate networks, intranets and the Internet over a wireless wide area network (not a WLAN)

