

## Exciting Times in Business Technology

*by Dave Pyron, November 2008*

A few months ago I read Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* which (among other things) described the French Revolution as a sea-change for social (and subsequent) worldwide transformation. The beginning of the book, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." is one of the most well-known lines in English literature and transcends time and subject to easily reflect current computer and Internet technologies.

Some amazing things have happened in the past fifteen years since wide-scale adoption of personal computers and the use of the Internet started a new social and business revolution. But by no means is the revolution over – in fact, we've just barely begun. The consumer side of the business usually gets the most press – in the US alone, Internet commerce has grown from \$47 Billion in 2001 to over \$150 Billion in 2006. Consumer gear like the iPod, HDTV, cell phones, and digital cameras have transformed people's lives in untold ways.

But on the business side of the fence, you might think things are run of the mill. Everyone gets a PC with Windows, MS Word and Excel and you're good to go. In fact, over the next few years, we will see a massive transformation for many businesses.

Businesses can plan for this future in five core areas: Unified Communications, Remote Employees (Virtual Workforce), Web Management Systems, Information Storage, and Server Virtualization. What's amazing is the inflection point that the industry is at – all of these technologies are coming to market at the same time, which means that everyone is going to benefit tremendously, but at the same time the choices are more complicated.

Unified Communications is probably most well known in the business community. It brings together all the many disparate ways of communicating and is intended to provide for a more efficient and richer method of communicating and working with others. Voice-Over IP vendors such as Cisco, Microsoft, and ShoreTel all have excellent solutions for Unified Communications.

The Virtual Workforce is a concept that describes the ability for employees and owners to work anytime, anywhere. The ability to work flex-time or at home is a huge benefit to parents (I'm one of them) and workers with long commutes, as well as to businesses who might need to outsource work even out of state. With MS Exchange Hosting, a Cisco phone system, and Citrix-published applications, anyone can work anywhere as if they were sitting in the next cubicle. It used to be that when I traveled, I couldn't get much done while away and I came back to piles of work. With Exchange Hosting and my Cisco softphone, my extension follows me wherever I am, and I stay caught up.

A Website Management System such as SiteFin can be combined with an Enterprise Resource Planning system (NetSuite) and a document management system (MS SharePoint or Fortis) to create a comprehensive web presence for both external and internal use. Our customers have realized great cost and efficiency benefits to their business by using all of these systems together.

With the rapid increase in large data files, a Storage Area Network (or SAN) is becoming critical to many businesses. SANs connect many hard drives together with lightning-fast connections, creating an incredibly secure, robust, fast, and large storage environment. SANs were primarily used in only large data centers but now even small businesses have access to the secure and robust environment a SAN offers.

And finally, Server Virtualization (also called Virtual Machine or VM) lets either a single physical server function as many different servers, or many different servers all function together as a single server for higher processing capability. VM will revolutionize how companies invest in their server architecture.

Upon entering a new year, the phrase “It is the best of times, it is the worst of times...”, still rings true. There are great things to come but the choices are many and can be confusing. Businesses should make it a point to find out more about these exciting technologies and how they can prepare for the coming “revolution”.

*Dave Pyron is the President and CEO of Pyron Technologies. He offers more than 18 years of experience in the computer industry, including published articles in national industry publications, and presenting as a guest speaker at regional and national technology forums. He holds numerous certifications, and has been working as a business and computer consultant for organizations around the U.S., including DePuy, DePuy-Acromed, djOrtho, American Association of Hip & Knee Surgeons, Spine University, the state of Montana, and a number of forward-thinking regional and national business and medical enterprises. Pyron Technologies, Inc. of Missoula, Montana, provides network solutions, medical technologies and website development to companies in Montana and throughout the U.S. Learn more at [www.pyrontechnologies.com](http://www.pyrontechnologies.com).*