



Atlantic Pilotage Authority Pilot Dispatch Service

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Charged with maintaining an efficient Pilotage service in the Atlantic Region, the Atlantic Pilotage Authority (APA) recently decided to perform its own dispatching operation in house, a task that had previously been performed by the Coast Guard.

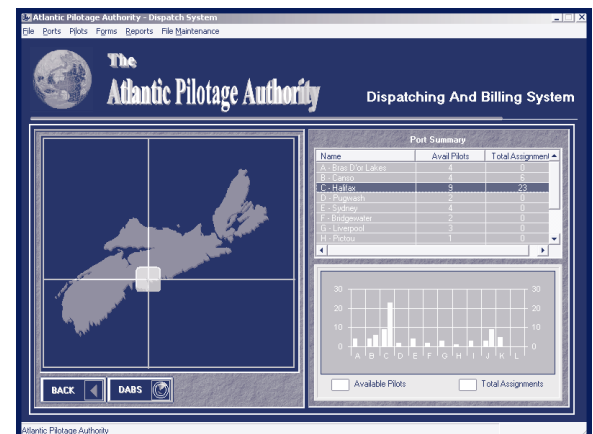
To assist with the implementation of this new service, Nicom was asked to participate by developing a new computerized pilot dispatch system for the APA.

This new system has been in place for one year now and has proven to be a valuable tool for the Atlantic Pilotage Authority dispatchers, management and pilots alike.

The system manages the dispatching of pilots to inbound and outbound seafaring vessels all over Atlantic Canada. This is a daunting task for even the strictest disciplines, but the integrated dispatching and billing system (DABS) has allowed the Atlantic Pilotage Authority to not only keep pace with an ever-growing number of Pilotage assignments, but also to better manage their resources and expenditures by streamlining the dispatching process.

DABS is web integrated for both the dispatchers and the pilots. The pilots are able

to view upcoming assignments, as well as their rotating duty roster, and any special notes they require for their assignment. The dispatchers even

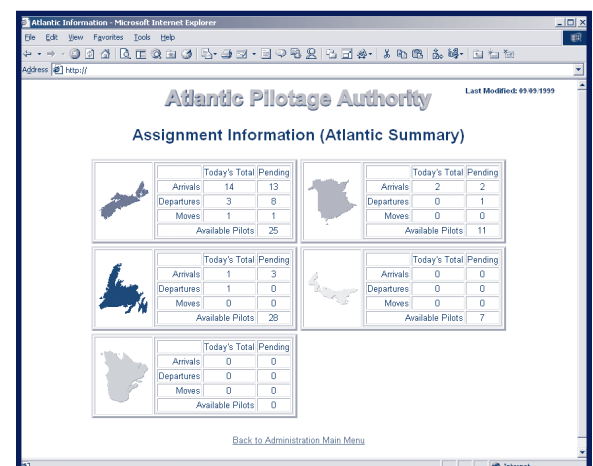


have live marine and land-based weather forecasts at their fingertips from Environment Canada.

The dispatching system, created using Microsoft Visual Basic and Microsoft SQL Server, offers a highly scalable, stable foundation, proving to be a critical and ever evolving tool for the Atlantic Pilotage Authority.

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A N E W N I C O M S E R V I C E

At Nicom, we estimate that 20% of the service calls we make for computer related problems are a result of systems receiving a computer virus. Another 20% of service calls are related to the failure of mechanical parts in the computer, often due to dust build-up on the components.

The unfortunate part to these service calls is that we all depend on our computers to help us with our jobs. When the computer is “down” our productivity plummets. The reality is that in today’s business environment the computer has become the primary business machine and, unfortunately, the most forgotten when it comes to maintenance.

To keep your computer operating at its peak efficiency, Nicom is now pleased to be able to offer a Preventive Maintenance Service. A Preventive Maintenance Agreement provides regular servicing for your server computer through six on-site visits per year. A similar service for desktop computers is available with the on-site service normally being provided on a twice-a-year basis. This important service may spot a potential problem in your system before it runs its full course and causes damage to your hardware and software.

The service can be tailored to your particular environment but it will typically involve cleaning of all of the components, inside and out, floppy drive and CD-ROM cleaning, system diagnostics, hard drive servicing, verifying tape backups are

working correctly, ensuring the system software and major applications have the most recent service patches applied, checking that anti-virus routines are working properly, and checking the functionality of the battery backup system.

As an addition to this service, there may be other services that are important to your organization such as verifying proper licensing

“We are proud to announce a new service now being provided by Nicom Preventive Maintenance.”

David Nicholson, President, Nicom Ltd.

of software, ensuring policies and standards are being met, reviewing security standards are being met and looking for security breaches.

Internet access and internet policies are very important considerations in today’s workplace. Having an Internet access policy and providing a policing function is another service Nicom can provide. Some potential Internet problems occur with employees visiting inappropriate sites, excessive Internet usage, damaging email messages being sent, downloading of programs from the Internet, and so on. As part of a preventive maintenance program, we would be pleased to review your particular situation and establish a service routine that best fits your organization.



There are a number of different search engines available for the internet today. One interesting site to visit is www.askjeeves.com, also called www.ask.com. *Ask Jeeves* has set itself apart from its competitors by letting users pose questions on the Web in natural every day language, as though you were speaking to a customer service representative. Personally I use *Ask Jeeves* frequently. You may want to try it out.



“The less a computer peripheral costs, the more it costs to fix.”

Murphy’s Law of Computing #1



With the wide acceptance of the World Wide Web, many people are now familiar with the term “Domain Name,” but there is still some confusion as to just what exactly is a Domain Name.

Domain Names are simply Website addresses. You can think of them as a telephone number for the Internet. Technically speaking, a Domain Name is an alphanumeric representation of the actual server Internet (IP) address where a Website is located. An example of a Domain Name is www.nicom.ca. The actual IP address for this Domain Name is 128.241.134.83. Rather than trying to remember this eleven-digit number, we can enter the www.nicom.ca and the Internet computer systems will use this information to determine the actual IP address and find the Nicom website.

The COM part of the Domain Name is called the Top Level Domain (TLD). In the United States, the traditional TLDs are COM, ORG, NET, EDU and GOV. These TLD extensions represent COMmercial, NETwork, EDUcational, GOVERNmental, MILitary, and ORGanizational.

The early TLDs named above have become over-crowded and almost every short English word in front of .COM has been taken. To help alleviate this problem, several new TLDs have been added to the World Wide Web for our use. These include BIZ, INFO, NAME, PRO, AERO, COOP, and MUSEUM.

Outside of the U.S., each country has a specific TLD. In Canada, we have .CA while Spain uses .ES. To view all of the country specific TLDs visit <http://www.iahc.org/dns-refs/registry.html> for an alphabetical listing.

Domain Names are available on a “first to register” basis, even names like ibm.com and dell.com. Domain names have become very hot business/internet real estate. To be successful on the internet, companies simply *must* get their company name in a domain name to compete for precious Internet real estate. If you don't believe that domain names are valuable, consider that PhotoLoft (previously named Altavista) sold the altavista.com name to Compaq for \$3.35 million dollars. Web marketers will tell you that branding is more important on the Web than on TV, radio, or print.

It is important to know that Domain Names are “portable”. If you move your Web pages from one computer to another, or even to a completely different Internet Service Provider (ISP), you can usually take your domain name with you. You cannot, however, take your numerical IP address: IP addresses are physical addresses for each computer on the Internet.

It has certainly been interesting to watch the changes taking place because of the success of the Internet. The use of Domain Names has made the use of the Internet much easier for all of us but, as with any new technology, there have been bumps in the road along the way.

“The one who does the least work always gets the most credit.”

Murphy's Law of Computing #2

Congratulations to Mr. Ken Acker of Nicom Ltd. on having recently become a Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP).

Microsoft Certified Professional

Certification provides professionals with accreditation that acknowledges their skills with Microsoft products. Microsoft Certified Professionals have demonstrated in-depth knowledge of at least one Microsoft product. Ken, having achieved his MCP designation, now has an in-depth knowledge of the MS Windows 2000 Operating System.



Over the past few months Nicom has had more clients infected by computer viruses than ever before. Many of these virus outbreaks have been variations of the “Love Letter” e-mail virus. Most of these clients have some type of antivirus software installed on their computers and yet still received a virus. What can be done to increase the effectiveness of our anti-virus software programs?

New viruses are being created every day, and your computer must be made aware of these new viruses so that your computer can be protected. This is accomplished by updating the “virus definitions” for your anti-virus software. It is extremely important that these virus definitions be kept as up-to-date as possible. Most anti-virus programs have a method of scheduling this update process to automatically run so you don't have to remember to do it. If it can't be scheduled, it can be updated manually by downloading the updates from the software company's website. New virus definitions are usually released weekly.

Another level of protection involves the anti-virus program itself, the “scan engine”. Some anti-virus software does not automatically update the scan engine when downloading the virus definitions. The scan engine is the program that does the work of searching for viruses. From time to time as new types of viruses come out, this program has to be changed to allow it to detect them. A new version of the scan engine is released every few months. Your anti-virus program should be updated on a regular basis by downloading the scan engine from the software company's website and installing it.

About Nicom



Nicom Ltd. is an information technology consulting company based in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. We have been providing services to private industry and government departments since 1982. Our focus is on helping organizations become more efficient and profitable through the use of information technology.

Services We Offer:

- Project Management
- Requirements Analysis
- Information Technology Strategy
- System Evaluation and Selection
- System Analysis and Design
- Database Application Development
- Financial and Distribution System Procurement
- Local Area Network Installation and Support Services
- E-business and E-commerce
- Web Site Construction
- Internet Database Integration & Other Internet Services
- On Going System Support Services
- Maximizer Contact Manager Consulting
- Data Warehouse Implementation
- Preventive Maintenance Service

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