

# SPOTLIGHT ON SOFTWARE

Your Data, Anywhere

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## Remote Access

Staying connected to your e-mail and files on the go is a cinch with these handy services and software.

by David Drucker

Over the years, road warriors have tried all sorts of ploys to ensure that nothing important gets left behind. No more. Now you don't even have to bother to carry even the smallest subnotebook. Instead, you can rely on the near certainty that a PC with Web access will be available at or near your destination. Once online, we're but a few clicks away from having remote control over the PCs humming away at home and in the office. All you need is a strong remote access application.

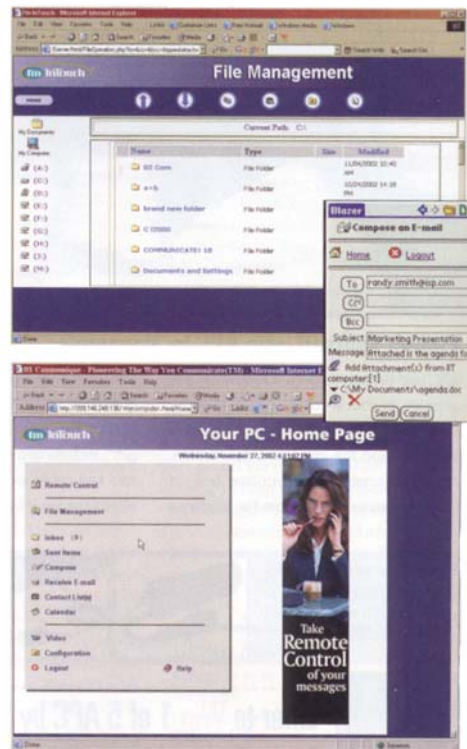
There are several ways to access a PC from a remote location. We took a look at the major players in the remote access arena. Our findings were almost uniformly positive, as each of the programs and services we looked at performed as advertised. Which solution is right for you will depend on the nature and scope of the connection that must be made.

### 01 Communique I'm In Touch \$99 per year

01 Communique's I'm In Touch provides direct access to e-mail and files via its host system, as well as you-are-there remote control with the screen duplicated, insofar as possible, on the client. The service can work not only with PC-based browsers, but with minibrowsers on wireless devices, as well.

Installing the program on the host is relatively simple: you're prompted to give the computer a name, and you then select a login name and password. After installation, a diagnostic tool tests the computer and its Internet connection in order to optimize performance during subsequent sessions.

The diagnostics tool found that our broadband router was preventing the computer from being reached from the Internet.



01 Communique I'm In Touch

The troubleshooting screen offered suggestions for working around this issue by configuring the router to allow connections through specific ports. We did so, and the diagnostics tool reported that we were good to go.

The connection process from a Web-connected PC is conducted via the Locator page at the I'm In Touch server. You're prompted to enter the computer name, select whether the connection is via a desktop or wireless browser, and choose whether or not to secure the connection with SSL. When the server finds your host, a peer-to-peer connection is established and the server withdraws. You are then asked for your username and password. You're then presented with a simple interface that allows you to access files, Outlook or Outlook Express e-mail, and Outlook contacts and calendars.

A nice feature of the e-mail viewing routine is its ability to display an attachment even if the application that created it isn't on the host or client system. The e-mail service also offers wireless notification of e-mail received at the host, with flexible filtering to make sure only the desired messages trigger notification.

The Remote Control option displays the host's screen on that of the client, while the File Management routine has an Explorer-like interface and can view files even if the associated application isn't on the local PC. If a Webcam is attached to the host PC, it can be viewed remotely.

I'm In Touch's major competition is GoToMyPC, and once the connection is made both services work seamlessly. The advantage afforded by I'm In Touch is that it costs \$80 less. The downside to I'm In Touch is the need to provide open ports for the server's use in locating the host. We recommend I'm In Touch to individual and small-business users as long as they can configure the system for necessary security.

Rating: ★★★★★