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March 06, 2006

Comparative Review: Remote Access Applications

I'm InTouch

By Scott Koegler

[Small Business Pipeline](#)

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I'm InTouch

[I'm InTouch](#) from 01Communique takes a slightly different approach to the remote access problem. Like the other products in this review, I'm InTouch delivers remote access as well as file transfer functionality to the desktop. In addition, it offers direct connection to both Outlook and Outlook Express data, presenting a page that looks very much like Microsoft's Outlook Web Access. Full calendar and contact functionality is available through the interface. I liked using this browser-based view rather than viewing the Outlook application's screen remotely. If you have ever used Outlook Web Access you'll be familiar with the interface. I found it to be more responsive than using Outlook via remote control.

I'm InTouch also has a file transfer mode that looks more like Windows Explorer than an FTP client. Copying files to and from the remote computer is done in the typical HTTP mode (click / "save as" to download, browse / select to upload). Most Internet users are accustomed to this approach. If you have a Web cam attached to your host PC, I'm InTouch lets you view either streaming video or snapshots taken at intervals from up to four cameras.

Installation of I'm InTouch was quick and easy, and just as with the other applications, it was not necessary to make any firewall modifications. Remote control of the desktop was responsive, and I was able to manually control the color depth of the remote desktop. For general use, the default 8-bit color depth is adequate and saves on bandwidth, contributing to speedy screen updates. I switched to 24-bit color and didn't notice a difference in the usage, but those on dialup or crowded connections may want to sacrifice the color rendition for better performance.

I was able to connect to my desktop from my Pocket PC easily. The ability to manage email and files from an ASCII menu (similar to Laplink's implementation) rather than working with a full remote desktop makes working on the small screen easy.

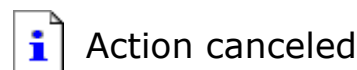
I'm InTouch is available for \$9.95 per month, or \$99.95 per year. That price includes allowing up to 10 simultaneous connections to the host, and makes it a great choice for those needing to make presentations to multiple participants

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Choosing the right remote access product

All four of these remote-access applications perform the main function of delivering your desktop screen to your local device, and they all do it well. At the same time, each has unique features that may make one more suitable to your needs than the others. The best way to find out is to make use of each company's free trial period. After you've used each of them for a while you'll be addicted to one of them. On the other hand, if you find you need the features of two or more, they all coexist on the same desktop with no problem.

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I think it's a perfectly legitimate idea. They are simply offering additional options to e-mail senders, not penalizing anyone else.

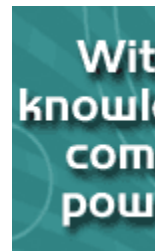
I'm a little worried about it setting a precedent for charging a premium for basic services that we should take for granted.

This alarms me a great deal. Setting up a two-tiered system for e-mail delivery is going to make smaller businesses into second-class citizens on the Web.

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