

Tribal Data Resources Integrates iLinc Software into Its Flagship Application to Give Customers Direct Access to Online Support

As a software developer and reseller, Tribal Data Resources (TDR) depends on Web conferencing to facilitate customer support and training. TDR provides Native American Tribes and tribal service organizations with the tools and training necessary to increase self-sufficiency and administrative resources.

TDR began using Web conferencing in a support and training capacity in 2002 when they implemented WebEx™. The company found Web conferencing to be so valuable that it was willing to invest high monthly fees in order to use the product.

Challenge:

Find a WebEx™ replacement solution to eliminate monthly Web conferencing costs. Also, ensure that the solution enable easy integration into TDR's own flagship software.

Solution:

Switch to the iLinc Enterprise Unlimited hosting program to reduce Web conferencing expenditures by 50% and shrink future costs to 10 to 20 percent of former yearly costs. Also, integrate iLinc into the flagship software to improve customer support and training.

After more than three years of WebEx usage and thousands of dollars invested in monthly fees, the company got a tip from a customer about iLinc. When TDR learned that a much less expensive, but equally effective tool was available, it launched an initiative to reevaluate Web conferencing and possibly switch to another provider.

"The WebEx pricing model didn't make sense for us," said Ross Hammer, Senior Software Developer, Tribal Data Resources. "When we got the tip about iLinc, we pursued it and discovered iLinc's licensing model to be a more cost-effective choice, particularly for a business like ours that uses Web conferencing on a daily basis."

The company examined other solutions besides iLinc during its reevaluation period, including Microsoft LiveMeeting™ which it ruled out because of the pricing model and because the interface wasn't intuitive enough for TDR's users. In the end, TDR selected iLinc's Enterprise Unlimited software and hosting program.

By purchasing software and allowing iLinc to host it, TDR gained the combined benefits of an ownership model and a software-as-a-service (SAAS) model. The organization wanted the ability to be operational very quickly without the added stresses of purchasing hardware, worrying about bandwidth, or consuming IT resources.

Users Quickly Adopt iLinc with Minimal Training

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TDR smoothly transitioned to the iLinc software by running both iLinc and WebEx for a couple of months before disabling WebEx. The company timed the iLinc rollout to occur during the final months of its WebEx contract, so that users had time to adjust to using iLinc, while phasing out of the old system.

To ensure successful adoption, Hammer and another staff member attended an iLinc training session online, in order to provide in-house support with some proficiency. For added support, Hammer sent links to iLinc's recorded tutorials to the organization's other users, enabling them to do self-paced online training.

According to Hammer, "Our users picked it up very quickly because the iLinc interface is easy-to-use and frankly, not drastically different from WebEx. They were able to get comfortable using iLinc with very minimal training."

“We’ve found iLinc to be invaluable in helping non-technical users through support, especially for more complex tasks,” explained Hammer. “The Desktop Sharing feature allows us to see exactly what the problem is and quickly resolve it.”

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Training Users for Long-term Success

In addition to selling its own software products, TDR resells and provides first-level support for another product, Datacard® ID Works® Identification Software. Because many of TDR’s customers are not adept with software applications, support representatives appreciate the interactive features of iLinc that enable hands-on guidance through support issues. A favorite problem resolution technique is using iLinc’s Desktop Sharing functionality to switch between the TDR software and Datacard ID Works, in order to set correct properties and alleviate technical struggles for customers.

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TDR Embeds iLinc Software into its Flagship Product

After approximately one year of use, iLinc has become so integral to the TDR support team that the company decided to integrate iLinc directly into the next version of its Progeny® membership and enrollment data management software.

When Progeny users (native US Tribes and Canadian Bands, many of which hold multi-seat licenses) upgrade to the latest version of Progeny, they will automatically install iLinc software as well. Users will be able to link directly to iLinc by clicking an Online Help link in the Progeny interface. Doing so will open a Web browser that lists all available iLinc support sessions.

“Incorporating iLinc into our flagship product allows us to seamlessly provide support and training to our valued customers,” said Hammer.

Although primarily used to deliver hands-on support and training, TDR also takes advantage of iLinc to perform live sales demonstrations. The company president in particular appreciates being able to demonstrate products on-the-fly in live Web sessions.

Hammer explains, “For the president of TDR, I set up permanent meetings that enable him to show off our software anytime. He can just jump into one of his saved iLinc sessions and his presentations and other materials are preloaded, right at his fingertips. On numerous occasions, he’s mentioned how pleased he is with this capability.”

TDR’s satisfaction with iLinc spans the financial realm, as well. In the first year of use, TDR paid only 50% of what it spent on WebEx for Web conferencing in previous years. And, the savings will increase over time. The company projects future costs with iLinc to be merely 10 to 20 percent of what they formerly spent on WebEx per annum.

Learn More:
www.iLinc.com
800.767.9054
followup@iLinc.com

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