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The lingo, complexity and sheer scale of on-demand computer often seem to be as large as crippling. But when you peel away the marketing spin and the many terms used to describe this phenomenon, you can reduce it to two phrases everyone understands: waste not, don't want to and pay as you go. While the concept may be simple, the execution is not. Full computing at enterprise level on demand requires degrees of reporting and management unheard of at most companies. It also involves rethinking the organizational structure of IT - focusing on business needs rather than on technical specialties. In an effort to hack through the definition thickness, here's a simple way to think of on-demand computer: This is when compute resources are made available to users on an as-needed, pay-per-use basis. These dynamically allocated resources can be maintained within the company itself, or they can be accessed by a service provider. Many in IT use the term utility computer as a synonym for on-demand computer, but utility implies near-aggregate use of outsourcing, application service providers and managed services. For some business executives, the idea is to turn on a tap and get all the IT you need - along with an easy-to-read account at the end of the month - attractive. But it will be a long time before that's reality in any major business. Existing investments in infrastructure, as well as the desire to use IT as a competitive differentiator in selected strategic areas, make the 100% utility model unacceptable for most. But you define it, on demand is in demand. In a recent Computerworld online survey, 32% of the 765 respondents said they were pursuing, piloting or have deployed on-demand computer, while 30% examined it. Economics is the primary driver. Most companies have optimized their IT environment and are looking for ways to find additional profits, says Jo-An Skowronek, vice president of business development at Affiliated Computer Services Inc., a Dallas outsourcer. Emphasis on cutting costs in 2003, when Cigna Corp. began talks with IBM about demand, cost reduction was the main motivator, according to Ben Flock, vice president of virtualization at the Philadelphia-based health care verses insurer. Cigna employs more than 3,000 servers for numerous applications, including self-service portal used by many of its 10 million customers. We developed programs on fly, so we had a lot of legacy [systems], Flock says. Initially, Cigna's goal was simply to move all applications to a single version of IBM's WebSphere to drive down operating expenses, he says. But when IBM said Cigna was a candidate for demand, Flock agreed. Other on demand, they also turned to the computer model to save money. Two years ago, when Exxon Mobil Corp. in Irving, Texas, its Mobil Travel Guide unit made an autonomous division, did, Travel Guide CIO Paul Mercurio has gone the service provider route, opting for IBM's On Demand Linux Virtual Services to host and manage the division's e-business applications. Despite the Exxon Mobil name, we acted as a start-up. We knew we would grow rapidly, and our business was seasonal, he says. Each large enterprise software vendor offers on demand in some form depending on the history and strengths of the seller. Some focus on management and reporting tools, others on virtualization, and still others on the services model. But a successful on-demand strategy also requires organizational change. At Georgia-Pacific Corp., CIO James Dallas tries to retool the IT mindset before introducing products and on-demand services. His goal is to help his 1,200 IT employees think more like business people before the Atlanta-based conglomerate shifts to demand. We need to run IT like a business, but what does that really mean? ask Dallas. To someone who's been in IT all his career, it's an empty phrase. To make the phrase meaningful, Georgia Pacific puts all of its IT employees through financial skills workshops and other fiscal training. Dallas has also tasked a communications specialist with constantly communicating the changes the new model will bring, and Georgia Pacific has formed centers of excellence around three key areas - business intelligence, server support and e-commerce - in which on-demand will be put to the test on demand. We're still early in the process, Dallas says, but we think it's important to take on demand as a business model and then put the technology in place. Alignment is all if there is an underdeveloped aspect of demand, it is that the model cannot succeed in one of its primary goals - aligned with IT use with business needs - unless it is coupled with a business process methodology. Some of the methodologies designed to do exactly what IT Information Library (ITIL), balanced scorecard, business service management and portfolio management are. These disciplines force organizations to start at square one, which can be frustrating for IT executives expecting quick benefits. Even basic nomenclature needs to be addressed; if storage

capacity or administrator isn't defined exactly the same way across all of an enterprise's data centers and IT groups, it would be impossible to pool and manage these resources. According to Chris Buss, manager of virtualization at Hewlett-Packard Co., this lesson was learned by Philips Semiconductors when the manufacturer implemented the Utility Data Center, HP's flavor of on-demand. Philips quickly found out they needed standard nomenclature in place, Buss says. So with the help of us they used ITIL to set to create universal definitions they called the Soldier's Handbook. Buss says Philips has since achieved 45% cost reductions in its data center operations. Getting serious early users demand was shrouded in unrealistic expectations and conflicting definitions until recently. Fortunately, the peak hype passed, replaced by sober assessment of the model's limitations. There are a number of business goals that can help resolve on demand, says Bill Mooz, senior director of utility computers at Sun Microsystems Inc. But it won't magically cut IT expenses on its own, he adds. If your costs are too high, it could be because you're using the wrong architecture or operational model, he says. You have to address the cause before you start worrying about [on demand] as a financial model. What needs to be done to push forward on demand? Analysts say apples-to-apples price comparisons will be a big step. All the major system vendors noticed this confluence of [distributed enterprise computers] trends and responded with a mix of services and highly distributed software, says Dan Kusnetzky, an analyst at Framingham, Mass.-based IDC. But they all spun it their own way; there are now a dozen buzzwords for on-demand. Kusnetzky says demand will find greater enterprise adoption when terminology and pricing models become more standardized. Flock says Cigna's move to a demand model for its IBM WebSphere operations has significantly reduced costs. Furthermore, he adds, the maturation of the discipline promises to bring about the hoped-for bond between business needs and IT resource allocation. The initial drivers for demand have been reduced operating expenses, Flock says. But we're seeing other benefits now, such as improved security and performance guarantees. It looks like the real thing. Ulfelder is a Computerworld contributing writer in Southboro, Mass. Contact him at sulfelder@charter.net. On demand, Un-HypedStories in this report: Copyright © 2004 IDG Communications, Inc. MemoMaster 3.5 of JBSoftware falls in that all-too-large category of software with the function list of Heaven and the implementation of the firefire. MemoMaster (free) is basically a free-form text database, such as TreePad Lite, AskSam, and several others, with an extensive list of extra functionality. These extras include an Excel compatible spreadsheet, the ability to create fillable forms, import/export from Word and Excel files, and many rich formatting capabilities. Most of these features work – sort of. First, a few caveats. The downloadable file is the shareware version, with many features enabled, that go away after 30 days when you go to the free version. There's a private version, which has the same feature as the Free version, but which costs \$19 and removes a night screen from the window. Then there are Small Office and Enterprise versions, which offer progressively more features at progressively higher prices. Unfortunately, most of the Very Cool features require the Small Office version at a when the 30-day trial expires, the feature set collapses significantly. At that 30-day mark, the Calculation field — essentially a spreadsheet memo — lost the ability to calculate, becoming just a big roster you can numbers tap into. You cannot create templates. You can't even drag-and-drop items to rearrange them in the outline (though you can still move them into folders via menu pick-up). While MemoMaster's shareware feature set is impressive, it's also a little weird. Its Microsoft Word import doesn't handle a few types of formatting perfectly, though I didn't observe any obvious data loss. The lime sheet has a very rich function set, but if you enter a formula incorrectly, it does not warn you or let you re-enter it; it simply clears the cell with no error message or warning. Type in a long formula and leave one brackets down, and you're back to typing it again. There is a slight inerticity to interface responsiveness. Once when I created a new memo, I got an Invalid Section number error that required me to dismiss the error dialog five times in a row; however, I could not repeat the sequence that led to this error. On the plus side, and there are a lot of positives, MemoMaster has quite a few features to add information to your information — icon tags and background colors, for example. However, many other features are available only in the commercial versions, such as links between memos, formatted tables, and detailed search results. MemoMaster saves no chance to remind you of this since the non-functional features are available until you try to use them. They're not even gray; you should actually try using a function to find out if you have access to it. MemoMaster 3.5 is an app I really want to keep, but the free version is too feature-sparse for my needs, and my experience with the occasional quirkiness of the functionality of the shareware version makes me reluctant to pay. However, I recommend trying out the download since there are a lot of good ideas here. 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