

## Web-based technologies give you access to powerful online tools without the IT headaches.

In the early 90s, CSC climbed out on a technological limb. While most service companies were investing heavily in developing software based on the popular client/server model, CSC opted to go a different route and begin developing web-based applications.

“CSC’s chief information officer had the foresight in early 90s to launch a customer extranet so that customers could view and manipulate their data,” explains CSC Sales VP Jennifer Kenton. “No one else thought that was important at the time, but we knew that customers would want to gain access to see and manage their compliance.”

Since CSC managed these transactions and maintained their most current information, Kenton says. “We gave our customers direct access to that information, so they could use our files as a database.” The products CSC offers today evolved from those first steps, she explains. “CSC IncSpot was the first interactive business-to-business site in our industry. We exploded company records into CSC RecordCenter, we exploded service of process history into same day service and ultimately into CSC PowerBrief,” Kenton says, listing some of CSC’s powerful suite of legal management

tools. “Ever since, our competitors have been playing catch-up; they continue to offer weak copies of our innovative solutions.”

The difference between the applications provided by CSC and those provided by competitors is the fact that they are fully web-based and not merely web-enabled. What is the difference, and how do the differences impact customers?

### *What’s the difference between web-enabled and web-based applications?*

Web-enabled applications are typically bridges, or web front-ends that companies create in order to provide some form of access to their original client/server programs. In these systems, much of the software resides on the client’s network, and two interfaces are required to connect the client-side software with the back-end web applications.

With web-based applications, there is no software on a client’s network; the application resides on a web server provided by CSC outside of the client’s network. Web-based applications require only a web browser, security clearance, and access to the website for a user to connect and use the product. No

other client/server companion products are needed to set up, maintain, or use the application.

“Web-based applications are a three-tiered level of application,” explains CSC CIO Jon Bergman. “The top tier is a ‘thin’ client, the middle tier is the application server, and the bottom tier is the database server that resides on the back end.” Web-based clients are called thin because the system’s design reduces the traffic of data going back and forth between the client and the host, he explains.

### ***What are the advantages of web-based applications?***

There are myriad benefits to working in a fully web-based environment. For starters, no software on site means no installation, maintenance, or upgrade issues. “With web-enabled systems you have software on the clients’ computers, which can create problems with downloads and the need to perform regular upgrades,” says Bergman. “The other issue you find is that it sometimes takes a rocket scientist to install and maintain the software, which leads to inflated IT departments, and lost time whenever the system goes down or has to be upgraded. With our web-based products, if there’s a problem, we handle it on our end.”

With web-based systems, there is no wait to start using the software. “It takes at least six months to get up and running on our competitors’ systems,” CSC’s Kenton says.

“With us, it’s as simple as sign the agreement and start using the system.” The attorney just turns on their computer, and the information is right in front of them.”

Training is also much more straightforward on a web-based system. “We do our training sessions on virtually,” Bergman. “There’s no need for users to take long courses or to travel offsite to learn the applications. They are browser-based and intuitive, and users become comfortable on the system almost immediately.”

Another advantage to web-based systems is that they eliminate the need to purchase more seat licenses as new users come online. “Our systems have unlimited access as permissioned by the customer,” affirms Kenton. “In addition to granting access to people within their companies, customers can also grant access to outside counsel, expert witnesses, board members, or whomever they want without increasing the cost of the service.”

No client-side software also affords greater security and data protection. Information is not scattered across a PC network. It resides on CSC’s database where it is safe. No lost information. In addition, because web-based systems do all processing at the database side and not on the PC network, data traffic is faster.

Unlike a web-enabled system, a web-based system can be accessed from anywhere. No special software is required. “A user only needs a password and access to the Internet to get

