



**Reducing IT support costs through  
automated electronic end-user support.**

---

**Contents**

---

**2 Introduction**  
**3 The need for automated electronic end-user support**  
**4 IBM Virtual Help Desk**  
**6 Accelerator for Virtual Help Desk**  
**7 Summary**

**Introduction**

Businesses are deploying new strategic applications enterprisewide and are experiencing an increase in the number of customer and employee service requests resulting from network-related and end-user computing problems. Many organizations typically handle these issues through a phone-based help desk—often requiring intensive human interaction, impacting service capabilities and response times, and driving up costs. To address these challenges, meet customer demands for virtually anytime, anywhere help and take advantage of a growing automated support market, companies are implementing integrated electronic service and support solutions.

According to IDC, “The worldwide ecustomer care services market, consisting of outsourcing and consulting services, represented a US\$30.2 billion opportunity in 2000. We forecast this market to expand at a CAGR [compound annual growth rate] of 20.3 percent between 2000–2005, reaching US\$76.1 billion by 2005.”<sup>1</sup> Explains Gartner Group, “By 2004, we see an 80-percent chance that 75 percent of software support incidents will be resolved using support automation technology.”<sup>2</sup>

IBM Global Services is poised to help businesses capitalize on the opportunities that electronic service and support presents. IBM On Demand Workplace employs an innovative electronic workplace strategy designed to help companies achieve cost savings, make information easily available to mobile workforces, and effectively share and manage business knowledge enterprisewide. Part of On Demand Workplace, IBM Infrastructure Resource Management Services - accelerator (IRM accelerator) for Virtual Help Desk™ is a customer-specific, customized end-user solution for computing support services that is designed to enable electronic service support and delivery to multivendor Microsoft® Windows®-based environments. Through an easy-to-use customizable portal, Virtual Help Desk provides around-the-clock automated electronic support



---

## Highlights

---

***IBM offers a customized, fully integrated, electronically delivered end-to-end solution that includes chat, video, support actions and context-driven search capabilities***

(e-support) via an intranet and linkage with industry-leading call management systems. Through the IRM accelerator for Virtual Help Desk offering, IBM Global Services professionals can implement a comprehensive solution and help accelerate a company's return on investment within weeks. It combines best-of-breed IBM practices with a pre-built e-support solution that can be personalized to the organization's environment.

IBM offers a customized, fully integrated, electronically delivered end-to-end solution that includes chat, video, support actions and context-driven search capabilities, accessible around-the-clock, with implementation available in a variety of languages. And IBM On Demand Workplace and Virtual Help Desk incorporate autonomic computing capabilities, key aspects of an e-business on demand™ enterprise—one whose processes are integrated end to end across the company and with key partners, suppliers and customers, enabling it to respond with speed to customer demands, market opportunities and external threats.

### **The need for automated electronic end-user support**

In an environment where companies are increasingly depending on electronic technology to drive business operations and growth, traditional help desk support systems present challenges. The proliferation of pervasive devices and expanding mobile workforces are driving the need for extended service hours and virtually anytime, anywhere access to critical information. Applications are growing more complex, increasing the need for support, and multivendor mission-critical environments are on the rise. Information technology (IT) departments face corporate barriers for financing nonstrategic support activities, yet often deal with insufficient technologies and tools to manage corporate support needs and the demand for high-quality support. Difficulty finding and retaining skilled help desk personnel directly contributes to inconsistent help desk support delivery, skills, tools and service levels.

---

**Highlights**

---

***Virtual Help Desk can provide prompt support, thereby helping to improve efficiency and effectiveness***

***Virtual Help Desk is ideal for companies looking to drive down IT support costs while providing fast, accurate and consistent user support***

***With Virtual Help Desk, companies have the flexibility to implement what they need now and add future capabilities***

Virtual Help Desk automated electronic support provides clear advantages over traditional support. Common support services, such as calls and onsite interventions, are often time-consuming, expensive, inefficient and frustrating for end users. Customers who call the help desk, for example, may have to wait on hold and are often asked for information they may not know, such as their system configuration and serial numbers. Virtual Help Desk can provide prompt support, virtually anytime and anywhere, thereby helping to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Its self-healing and self-diagnosing capabilities can allow valuable technical resources to concentrate on other critical tasks. Virtual Help Desk also identifies recurring problems by collecting data and creating automated responses, resulting in improved productivity and increased efficiency. In fact, Virtual Help Desk can reduce calls to the help desk by up to 30 percent—generating significant cost savings.<sup>3</sup>

**IBM Virtual Help Desk**

Virtual Help Desk is ideal for companies looking to drive down IT support costs while providing fast, accurate and consistent user support. It builds on self-healing, self-help and assisted service processes to successfully answer user questions. A modular solution that offers a variety of options, Virtual Help Desk is designed to provide companies with the flexibility to implement what they need now and add future capabilities as they are developed. The foundation module of Virtual Help Desk features an electronic support portal that includes the following:

- *Site navigation “triage”*
- *Frequently asked questions*
- *System outage database*
- *Knowledge-base capabilities*
- *Integrated search capabilities*
- *Client data/state capture*
- *Graphical user interface (GUI) administration*
- *Flash news ticker and alerts*
- *Site analytics, such as reporting*
- *Ticket submission and status capabilities*
- *National language and double byte character set support.*



---

## Highlights

---

***Virtual Help Desk includes ticketing integration with industry-leading products***

***Virtual Help Desk features state-of-the-art technologies from IBM Research Labs***

It also includes ticketing integration with industry leading products, including those from Peregrine Systems, BMC Remedy, Siebel Systems, McAfee/DPU, Quintus and IBM Global Services e-ESM, the service management area within the IBM Global Services managed operations competency.

The Virtual Help Desk foundation module includes leading-edge IBM software, such as IBM WebSphere® Application Server. A high-performance and extremely scalable transaction engine for dynamic e-business applications, WebSphere Application Server features an Open Services Infrastructure, allowing companies to deploy a core operating environment that works as a reliable foundation capable of handling high-volume, security-enhanced transactions and of leveraging Web services.

Virtual Help Desk also features state-of-the-art technologies from IBM Research Labs, such as:

*eSearch*—A Web-based knowledge management retrieval system used for building and searching question-and-answer or “tech tips” knowledge bases. Through a Web interface, users can enter a query string and choose which knowledge bases to use for that query. When a query is submitted, eSearch returns a ranked list of relevant answers from which the user selects the most appropriate response.

*eGatherer*—A systems interrogation program that collects hardware and software configuration and error information from client equipment. Data is collected and can be viewed easily by the end user or, if required, submitted electronically with the support request. This information enables help desk support agents to work on configuration issues and support environment variables before involving the end user.

*eClassifier*—Designed for IBM knowledge engineers for use on unstructured data sets, such as problem ticket logs from a computer help desk, eClassifier helps engineers determine common problems, and find or write solutions to help users solve them via automated methods.

---

**Highlights**

---

***Virtual Help Desk offers various options, including enhanced support, printer management, password management and customer-specific solutions***

***IBM consistently helps companies reduce project risks and accelerate time-to-value***

The following Virtual Help Desk options are available:

- *Enhanced support*
  - *Offers self-service capabilities to reduce help desk calls*
  - *Automates support actions with scripted solutions*
  - *Includes self-healing capabilities to proactively correct issues before they become problems*
  - *Uses an analyst console with “push” capabilities including a chat interface, remote control, a remote command prompt and a remote file explorer*
- *Printer management*
  - *Offers a centralized remote printer setup utility for any Internet Protocol printer on the company network*
  - *Allows users to use the “print on demand” feature to search for printers in other areas, buildings or cities*
  - *Streamlines printer definition and printer driver downloads with a Web-based administration module*
- *Password management*
  - *Offers password reset and synchronization for a wide range of platforms*
- *Customer-specific solutions*
  - *Provides integration with customer tools and services.*

**Accelerator for Virtual Help Desk**

IBM Global Services professionals are uniquely qualified to help companies select and implement automated electronic support solution technologies that best meet their support objectives. Using the comprehensive and sophisticated accelerator for Virtual Help Desk engagement model, IBM consistently helps companies reduce project risks and accelerate time-to-value. IBM provides not only an implementation methodology, but also a predefined solution that enables an out-of-the-box e-support portal with comprehensive foundation and optional components. During the engagement, the accelerator for Virtual Help Desk team facilitates four workshops designed to familiarize and train your IT support team on the tailored solution.



---

## Highlights

---

*The IRM accelerator suite is designed to implement an integrated infrastructure resource management solution within weeks*

*IBM works closely with organizations to help them exploit the advantages of automated electronic end-user support*

Accelerator for Virtual Help Desk is part of the IBM Infrastructure Resource Management Services accelerator portfolio<sup>4</sup> which encompasses service management and asset management patent pending solutions. The IRM accelerator suite is designed to implement an integrated resource management solution within weeks, while establishing a firm foundation to help you realize the benefits derived from integrating your processes and technology. All IBM accelerator service offerings are created to deliver solutions based on a best-of-breed process design that can be further personalized to your environment.

### Summary

Accelerator for Virtual Help Desk, part of the IBM On Demand Workplace innovative electronic workplace strategy, can help companies efficiently reduce IT support costs, increase productivity and improve user loyalty and satisfaction. By merging our solution components and the intellectual capital we have acquired over numerous engagements, IBM works closely with organizations to help them exploit the advantages of automated electronic end-user support. IBM has access to vendors that provide industry-leading electronic support products, and can bring together the various components and integrate them into an efficient, cost-effective, reliable solution.

IBM Global Services specialists have comprehensive skills and expertise in the various areas of electronic support enablement—including integration services, stress testing and integration with hosting services—as well as access to extensive field resources and skills coverage models. By effectively leveraging our proven automated electronic support methodology and leading-edge technology, IBM can provide an end-to-end engagement to help reduce project risks and help ensure successful implementation and deployment of a Virtual Help Desk solution.

### For more information

To learn more about IBM Global Services, IBM On Demand Workplace and IBM Infrastructure Resource Management Services - accelerator for Virtual Help Desk, please contact your IBM sales representative, or visit:

**ibm.com**/services/ism/irm



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2003

IBM Global Services  
Route 100  
Somers, NY 10589  
U.S.A.

Printed in the United States of America  
09-03  
All Rights Reserved

IBM, the IBM logo, the e-business logo, "e-business on demand," the e(logo) business on demand lock-up, Virtual Help Desk and WebSphere are trademarks or registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

Microsoft and Windows are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

Other company, product and service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

References in this publication to IBM products or services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates.

---

1 Bingham, Brian J., eCustomer Care Services: Worldwide Market Forecast and Analysis, 2000-2005, IDC report, June 2001.

2 Adams, Tony and Igou, Bob, "Software Support Companies Implement Support Automation," Focus Report, Gartner, May 17, 2002.

3 Ibid

4 Accelerating the return on infrastructure resource management white paper, IBM Global Services white paper, [www-1.ibm.com/services/ism/irm](http://www-1.ibm.com/services/ism/irm).