

# LANsultants Times

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## NEW TECHNOLOGY THAT REALLY WORKS

Two technologies which work well and are cost effective are gigabit cabling to the workstation and LCD monitors. Gigabit Ethernet, or 1000BASE-T, is ten times as fast as 100BASE-T, sometimes referred to as "Fast Ethernet". For the last 6 months or so 10/100/1000BASE-T NICs have become standard on workstations, but Gigabit Ethernet for the workstation was not possible as it requires CAT-6 cabling and a Gigabit Ethernet switch. For new networks, CAT-6 data cabling has become LANsultants' standard. We thought we were installing this for the future as Gigabit switches were still extraordinarily expensive. However, Dell has just lowered the cost on the PowerConnect 2624 switches which provide Gigabit to all 24 ports making Gigabit networking cost effective on new networks.

LCD monitors continue to come down in price, and I expect them to be actually less expensive than conventional CRT (cathode ray tube) monitors by the end of the year. Our most popular LCD monitor, the Acer 1703 Multi-Media (with embedded stereo speakers), has decreased more than 25% already this year from \$295 to \$235. Additionally, as LCD monitors are measured differently, an LCD 17" display is 1" larger, as measured diagonally, than a CRT monitor, uses less energy, contains far less toxic metal, and is not as susceptible to magnetic interference if your office happens to be next to the elevator shaft.

I expect that by the end of the year we will stop providing CRT type monitors to our clients. Our technicians will be very pleased as they are bulky and heavy compared to LCD monitors.

## OLDER TECHNOLOGY THAT FINALLY WORKS!

It has been a long time coming, but certain technologies that clients have been needing for years finally work as advertised. These include voice recognition, scanning, and remote access.

### Voice Recognition

We have had great success with Dragon Naturally Speaking Preferred version 8. The product comes with a microphone and runs on almost any P4 with 256 MB or more RAM running MS-Windows 2000 Pro or XP Pro well. As the P4 specification includes a sound card generally, no additional sound capability is required. Though there are legal-specific versions of Dragon available costing nearly \$1,000, the Naturally Speaking Preferred version 8 at \$200 is more than adequate for most users' needs.

### Scanning

The HP 8250c is an excellent entry level scanner capable of moderate loads using its 50-page automatic document feeder. Depending upon how the scanner is to be used, Adobe Acrobat, OmniForm or TextBridge may also be necessary. For heavier loads, the Ricoh DC330 is the solution. This is an industrial strength scanner and costs almost three times as much.

### Remote Access

For those of you who remember the slowness of pcAnywhere on a dialup connection and have not tried remote access using a high speed Internet connection, then it is time to give remote access another try. GoToMyPC, LogMeIn, Citrix and Microsoft's Remote Web Workspace all provide excellent remote access solutions.