



SOLUTIONS IN ACTION



Atlas Van Lines (Canada) Ltd., a leader in the household goods moving industry, has agency representation in over 120 cities right across Canada. The main computer platform for the company is an AS/400, which handles all the company's information processing.

**ATLAS VAN LINES (CANADA) LTD. MOVES ITS AGENTS TO THE INTERNET USING HOSTFRONT®**

**HISTORY**

In the past, Atlas provided its agents the ability to communicate with its information - processing system, using the Canadian DATAPAC X.25 dial up communications service. This communication method was slow and expensive. Charges were made on an hourly rate based on distance and volume of packets sent and received. The maximum speed provided was 9600 characters per second, and the more the agents used DATAPAC, the more it cost.

embark on the information highway when the Internet was still in its infancy. John Girolami, Manager of Technological Development, was given the mandate to evaluate this new medium of communication. In the fall of 1995, Atlas unveiled its first Web site at its Canadian convention in Ottawa, Ontario. Atlas was one of the first van lines in North America to have a Web site that provided information about the van line to the corporate world and to its customer base.

The applications developed specifically for the agents included generation of estimates, registration of orders, generation of bills of lading, the ability to enter diary notes regarding orders, and access to claims data and financials. The software used for dialing into the system was not generic and, therefore, needed to be sent to each new agent. This made sign-up times longer than preferred -not to mention an administrative headache.

**FARABI TECHNOLOGY & HOSTFRONT**

In 1998, Atlas decided to move access to its Integrated Van Line's Agents Network (IVAN) via the Internet. Various solutions were investigated, however, these solutions allowed for only 5250 screen data to be passed over the Internet. "The problem was finding a Web-to-host solution that provided printing on preprinted forms over the Internet. This was a crucial issue for us," stated Girolami.

**THE INTERNET**

Several years ago, Atlas Canada decided to "Atlas then decided to work exclusively with

**SOLUTION OVERVIEW:**

COMPANY:  
Atlas Van Lines (Canada) Ltd.

INDUSTRY:  
Transport

BUSINESS:  
Moving & Shipping Company

BUSINESS SOLUTION:  
On-line access to AS/400-based shipping information for remote offices.

ARCHITECTURE:  
Windows Server  
Microsoft HIS  
HostFront for the AS/400

BENEFITS:  
Dramatically reduced communications costs; Ability to remotely print on pre-printed forms.

Continued >



Farabi, who had committed to extend the printing solution to its HostFront product," said Girolami. To ensure the printing solution worked with the printer brands that were already in the field, testing was done from Atlas' Oakville corporate office, and Farabi provided on-going support from Montreal. "We knew that if we could get the order-estimate print routine to function properly, then everything else would fall into place" explained Girolami.

The Internet version of IVAN was first introduced to the agency family through the Technology Committee, which is comprised of Atlas' head office staff and a number of agents across the country. The committee was kept informed of the development of the project every step of the way, and a select group who had experience with the IVAN package was moved over to test the Web-based version. "Since then, Atlas has continued to progressively move agents to the HostFront gateway for secure remote access over the Internet, and now users, agents, and their staff, as well as customers, are online," explained Girolami.

Another important factor for Atlas, was the easy transition to the HostFront system. The only software required by the agent was

Windows 95 and the Internet Explorer browser. HostFront downloaded ActiveX controls to agent's desktop browsers for handling screen and printer sessions with the AS/400, thereby eliminating the distribution of software to remote locations.

### WHAT'S IN THE FUTURE?

"Atlas will also be looking at integrating its satellite communications link between its trucking fleet and the head office with the Internet. "We are also looking at implementing some of the new HostFront features which include a new drag-and-drop file transfer utility. This will allow us to link the head office with the agents desktop-based applications," explained Girolami. Atlas also plans to migrate to a graphical component in the near future. The HostFront Publishing module provides clients with a user-friendly, HTML-based interface to automate certain operations such as providing agents with cost estimates.

Asked about their overall satisfaction, Girolami replied, "We are very happy with the results and hope to continue our good relationship with Farabi".

**"THIS WILL ALLOW US TO LINK THE HEAD OFFICE WITH THE AGENTS DESKTOP-BASED APPLICATIONS."**

JOHN GIROLAMI  
MANAGER OF TECHNOLOGICAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
ATLAS VAN LINES  
(CANADA) LTD.

### Farabi Technology Corporation

#### Head Office

4921 Place Olivia  
St-Laurent, QC  
Canada H4R 2V6  
Email: sales@farabi.com

Toll Free: 800-565-3455  
Tel: 514-332-3455  
Fax: 514-332-3915  
[www.farabi.com](http://www.farabi.com)

#### International

P.O. Box 21300  
Deira, Dubai  
U.A.E.  
Email: sales@farabi.ae

Tel: 971-4-262-7300  
Fax: 971-4-269-6300  
[www.farabi.ae](http://www.farabi.ae)

**Microsoft**  
CERTIFIED  
Partner