

ASTERISK AND VICIDIAL: REAL-WORLD VOIP SOLUTIONS IN THE ENTERPRISE

By Matt Florell

What is Asterisk?



- Software PBX(Phone Switch)
- Open Source (GPL Licensed)
- Extremely flexible platform to build other applications on top of
- Allows for use of traditional T1 and POTS lines as well as VOIP trunks
- Has basic inbound-only call center application built-in

Why Use Asterisk?



- No-cost Open-Source version and very low-cost Commercial version
- Code can be altered any way you want by anyone
- Compatible with over 100 different hardware phones and software phones
- Claims over two million users of Asterisk around the world

What is VICIDIAL?



- Software-based Call Center Suite (inbound/outbound/blended call handling, allows remote agents, remote monitoring, native recording and much more)
- Open Source (GPL Licensed)
- No per-seat Licensing costs
- Scalable across multiple servers up to hundreds of agent seats

Why use VICIDIAL?



- Very large cost savings over proprietary call center software, which averages from \$500-\$1500 per agent seat
- Ability to customize the software within your company
- Over 100 independent consultants able to install and manage VICIDIAL
- Over 250 companies using it in over 30 countries

How Many Call Centers Are There?

- Datamonitor estimates:
 - In United States, over 50,000 call centers with over 2 million agents
 - In Canada, over 8,000 call centers with over 250,000 agents, majority of those in Ontario
- Average startup cost is over \$500,000. Over half of which is the cost of the call center hardware and software

Opportunities For IT Professionals

- Market for Asterisk is growing very fast
- Remote installation and administration is very common in the Asterisk/VICIDIAL market, you can live anywhere
- You can learn Asterisk and VICIDIAL from home on older hardware with no out-of-pocket cost

Opportunities for Companies

- Greater internal control over your telephony and call center systems
- Tighter telephony integration with internal applications(CRM, ERP, Accounting, etc...)
- Save significant money over proprietary systems
- No fears over end-of-life from product creators

Issues with Moving to VICIDIAL

- Other company processes deeply tied to existing proprietary system
- Agent stations that are very old, Pentium 2 and older computers, or remote “dumb terminals” are not capable of running the VICIDIAL web-based agent application
- Use of legacy proprietary digital phones

Case Study: 100 Seat Call Center BEFORE VICIDIAL

- Proprietary predictive dialer: \$1,000/seat
- Monthly service: \$20/seat
- Custom changes cost \$350/hour to implement, only could be done by creator
- No blended inbound/outbound
- Management of recordings required two full-time employees

Case Study: 100 Seat Call Center AFTER VICIDIAL

- Per seat Licensing cost: \$0/seat
- Monthly service: \$15/seat
- Custom changes mostly done in-house, or for \$100/hour from outside consultants
- Full blended inbound/outbound
- Management of recordings built-in and automated

**If you want to hear more about
Asterisk and VICIDIAL, come to
the Toronto Asterisk User Group
meeting, tonight here at the
Convention Centre**