WHITE PAPER

Upgrading to a Wireless ATM

Although nearly everyone agrees that wireless connectivity is the wave of the future, all solutions aren't created equal.

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When ATMs became prevalent beginning in the 1970s, they were generally installed at the bank branch, either in the lobby or outside the branch.

Advancements in computer connectivity throughout the '80s and '90s opened up new locations for ATM deployments. Increasing modem speeds meant that an ATM could be installed anywhere the deployer had access to a telephone line and a power source.

Still, that wasn't a perfect solution. Even with improvements in modem technology, there was a limit on how quickly data could be transmitted. If a location lacked access to a phone line, well, it was simply off the list as an ATM location.

Wireless technology has changed all that. Cellular connectivity means that an ATM can be deployed almost anywhere there is a suitable power source. And upgrade kits mean that older machines can be easily outfitted with the latest connectivity solution.

Still, there are differences between the various solutions on the market today. In this white paper, sponsored by Triton Systems of Delaware LLC, we'll look at the benefits of wireless connectivity and why some solutions might be more appropriate than others.

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Location and cost

One of the top benefits of deploying a wireless ATM is the cost compared with a wired ATM.

"Most of the ATMs out in the field today still use dialup services, which can cost $45 a month or more, not to mention that it's slow," said James Phillips, vice president of sales and marketing with Long Beach, Miss.-based ATM manufacturer Triton. "Shifting to wireless can generally cut your connectivity costs in half or more."

And of course, one of the key benefits of a wireless ATM is that it can be installed anywhere the deployer has access to a power source, meaning that he or she can avoid paying setup fees for the installation of a telephone line.

Aside from the fact that having a telephone line installed could take days or weeks, in many locations such installations may be prohibited by the property owner to avoid causing damage.

Wireless ATMs offer the ability for temporary deployment at fairs, music festivals and similar events. The annual Bonnaroo Music Festival held in Manchester, Tennessee, for example, draws as many as 90,000 people each year. In addition to the music, the event offers everything from food to crafts and hundreds of thousands of dollars change hands over the course of the four-day event. To take care of those who may run short of cash, event organizers provide a number of wireless ATMs on the festival grounds.

And despite the best research, some locations just don't bring the number of transactions the deployer had hoped. In those cases, the ATM can be loaded up, moved to a better spot and plugged in to a power source for instant operation.

Photo by Lars Plougmann via Flickr

Wireless ATMs give deployers the freedom to load up under performing ATMs and move to a new spot.

Multimedia applications and making a choice

Computer-savvy customers are no longer satisfied with the plain green graphic interface that was the hallmark of ATMs just a few years ago. And financial institutions more and more are looking at the ATM screen as a way to communicate with customers who haven't visited a branch in years.

Dialup service simply doesn't allow the data throughput rate necessary to provide customers with a rich multimedia experience. Those who own a smartphone, such as an Android or iPhone, know the multimedia capability of a wireless connection, and they are beginning to expect that everywhere they go.

Therein lies a key difference between the various wireless solutions offered by ATM equipment providers when it comes to upgrading existing machines for wireless functionality.

"Many vendors offer what is known as a 'spoof box,' which basically plugs into the telephone jack on the back of the machine and converts the signal to wireless," Phillips said.

"For a dialup ATM, the machine still goes through the steps that it would normally go through for a dialup transaction," he said. "You still have that 'handshake' delay that occurs."

Triton's solution, however, is designed to work with its ATM software and ATM monitoring solution, Triton Connect, and is designed to be a wireless transaction from the beginning. The result is that the transaction speeds are faster than those accomplished with a spoof box, and the higher data throughput speed allows for easier ad screen downloads, reporting and journal uploads via Triton Connect.

Although the solution is currently available just for Triton machines, the company is working on expanding that to machines from other manufacturers.

Independent ATM deployers looking for ways to provide a rich multimedia experience are turning to a wireless connection after discovering that dialup service doesn't allow the data throughput rate necessary.

The security question

With computer hacking and identity theft a growing problem around the world, one of the biggest issues for independent ATM deployers is security.

Although he couldn't speak for other equipment providers, security isn't a concern with Triton's wireless solution, Phillips said.

"Our transactions are TCP/IP, Secure Socket Layer, on the same level as today's online purchases," Phillips said.

"People often ask if the transaction can be intercepted, and the answer is that it can't," he said. "All of the data is encrypted and sent to the processor. Even if someone could look at the signal, there is nothing they could do because the data wouldn't mean anything to them."

About the sponsor: *With more than 200,000 installations in more than 24 countries worldwide, Triton has been a trusted leader for affordability and service for 30 years. Triton's full line of ATMs for retail locations and financial institutions are designed and assembled in the United States at a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Long Beach, Miss. In addition, Triton offers world-class customer support, parts, service and training via partner ATMGurus.*