

# TECHNOLOGY HORIZONS



Aligning Information Technology With Business Strategy

SUMMER 2012



## Supporting the Whole Business

**Fiddler's Elbow Country Club appreciates Atlantic-IT.net's holistic approach, which looks at IT from a business perspective.**

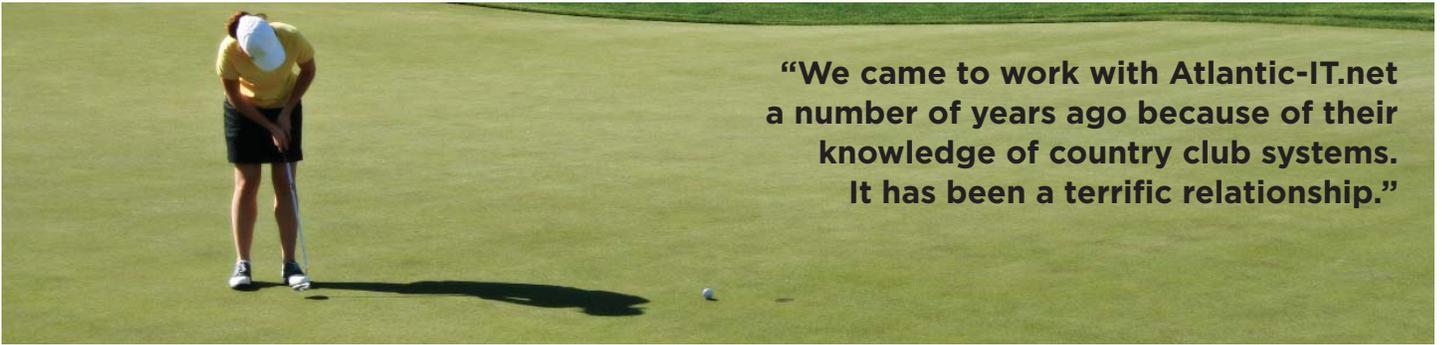
**F**iddler's Elbow Country Club offers its members picturesque grounds, championship golf and world-class amenities — all supported by a high-tech infrastructure. Fiddler's Elbow was founded in 1965 as a private corporate country club, and its members include leading companies and prominent professionals in diverse industries. In addition, the Club is expanding its membership offerings to include individual and family memberships along with its traditional corporate memberships. Today, the club's team of dedicated professionals utilizes the latest technologies to meet members' changing demands.

Behind the scenes, Atlantic-IT.net works to ensure that these technologies are available and performing optimally. More significantly, Atlantic-IT.net stays abreast of Fiddler's Elbow's business

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# Supporting the Whole Business

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**“We came to work with Atlantic-IT.net a number of years ago because of their knowledge of country club systems. It has been a terrific relationship.”**

requirements, and recommends technology solutions that can enhance the club’s ability to serve its members.

“We really appreciate the fact that they spend time with us on planning,” said Brendon Steidle, Controller, Fiddler’s Elbow Country Club. “We have regular review meetings with Krystal Triumph, our account manager, where we talk about the status of all of our equipment, what’s due for replacement, what types of issues are coming up. Krystal doesn’t just spend time on the IT side but also finds out what’s happening in the entire business so she can recommend technologies that might be useful to us.”

Atlantic-IT.net’s holistic approach also encompasses all aspects of the IT lifecycle. IT Director Michael Stenger and his team of engineers, project managers and technicians work in concert to ensure customer satisfaction from implementation through ongoing support.

“Every member of our team who touches the customer’s environment understands not only the technology but the customer’s business goals,” Stenger said. “We are proud to provide Fiddler’s Elbow with a comprehensive solution that supports their objectives.”

## Improved Communications

Situated in Bedminster Township, N.J., Fiddler’s Elbow Country Club showcases nearly 1,000 acres of spectacular countryside with three 18-hole golf courses, making it the largest private club in N.J. Strong communication is critical to club managers who may be anywhere on the property at any given time. Atlantic-IT.net recently upgraded the club’s aging PBX system to an Avaya IP phone system to better support mobile communications.

“It’s been fantastic,” Steidle said. “The biggest thing is that it helps me sleep a little bit better at night — with a 20-year-old system we never knew when it would fail. But from a communication perspective, it enables our managers to

receive their voicemail messages in their email, which they can access via their smartphones. Before, messages were often stale by the time the managers were able to check voicemail.”

Atlantic-IT.net manages the phone system, but Fiddler’s Elbow staff members are able to add or change users. That’s a big step up from the previous system.

“We didn’t touch anything before — we had to call in a tech to make any type of change. The new system has software we can use to make changes ourselves. We have a lot more control than we used to,” Steidle said.

As part of the upgrade process, Atlantic-IT.net inventoried and analyzed the Fiddler’s Elbow’s phone lines. Atlantic-IT.net’s experts determined that the club could save a lot of money by switching to a fiber-optic solution.

“Over time we had acquired all kinds of phone lines. Atlantic-IT.net helped us determine what we were using and what we could do without. We realized that we could save money by switching to a different type of voice solution,” said Steidle. “We were basically able to pay for the new system by eliminating the old unused lines. And the fiber-optic connection provides us with much faster bandwidth for our data purposes.”

## Staying Up-to-Date

Fiddler’s Elbow’s history goes back to the 1930s, when investment banker Frederick Strong Moseley Jr. and his wife, Jane Hamilton Brady, purchased the property. The Moseleys built the stone manor house that today serves as the main clubhouse and introduced the sporting lifestyle.

The club celebrates that heritage while ensuring that its technology infrastructure is up-to-date. Atlantic-IT.net recently completed various server and software upgrades to ensure that the club’s computer systems support its operations.

The game hasn't changed much.



But the business has.

Country clubs today have a number of unique IT challenges that few technology providers are prepared to handle. Atlantic-IT.net understands that cookie-cutter solutions will not meet these distinctive needs.

Atlantic-IT.net is committed to supporting every technology within your operations, including:

- Point of Sale Support
- Club Management Software
- Irrigation Management Systems

In addition, we can assist you with communications, digital signage, wireless and other technologies that can enhance your operations.

We also understand that your hours of operation are not Monday through Friday, 8 to 5. We are available to support your mission-critical systems when you need us — early in the morning, late in the evening and on weekends. We can also bring in additional technology resources and support when you host tournaments and special events.

Partnering with us enables you to concentrate on providing your members with superior service and a memorable experience. Just as you provide your members with a relaxing haven from their busy lives, we provide you with the peace of mind that all of your technology needs will be taken care of expertly and efficiently.



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“Atlantic-IT.net swapped out our old server for a new one, and upgraded the server operating system to the latest version. The new system enhances security by giving us more control over user access,” Steidle said. “We also added an off-site backup solution. Now all of our data is being backed up to a remote location as well as onsite. It also helps me sleep a little bit better at night knowing that there are multiple copies of our data we can access in the event of a problem.”

Steidle says that the server upgrade did not result in any significant downtime — an important plus for a business that operates for extended hours seven days a week.

“When we had server replacements in the past, there would be a couple of days when we couldn’t get into the system,” he said. “This one was terrific because they were able to build the new server side-by-side with the old one while the old one continued to run. All the data migration happened overnight. We were able to operate during the changeover with very few interruptions.”

### Part of the Team

Atlantic-IT.net has completed a number other projects for Fiddler’s Elbow, including an upgrade to Microsoft Exchange 2010 and implementation of remote terminal services. Both solutions help improve the flow of information throughout the club.

“Our golf course maintenance department is in a separate building. With remote terminal services, they’re able to log into our main systems,” said Steidle.

It all goes back to Atlantic-IT.net’s comprehensive approach. Atlantic-IT.net helps ensure that Fiddler’s Elbow’s systems are up-to-date, managed and supported so that the club does not experience downtime or performance issues.

“We recognize the importance of providing not only a seamless implementation but ongoing support,” Stenger said. “The only way to derive maximum value from technology investments is to ensure that systems are managed and maintained long after the implementation is complete.”

“We don’t have any IT staff. Atlantic-IT.net is our IT team,” Steidle said. “It’s more cost-efficient to use their services than hire someone. And they’re terrific from a support point of view, always quick to respond to issues. We definitely would not consider an in-house person. We came to work with Atlantic-IT.net a number of years ago because of their knowledge of country club systems. It has been a terrific relationship.”

# Atlantic-IT.net's Krystal Triumph Designated a Certified Hospitality Technology Professional

*Designation demonstrates her expertise in the latest technologies and understanding of the unique business needs of hotels and private clubs.*

Atlantic-IT.net's Krystal Triumph recently earned the Certified Hospitality Technology Professional (CHTP) designation from the Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals (HFTP) organization and the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA). The designation demonstrates her understanding of the unique requirements of organizations within the hospitality sector as well as her experience and expertise with the latest technologies.

"Atlantic-IT.net has years of experience working with clients in the hospitality industry, including independent hotels and private clubs," Triumph said. "We've come to really understand their business needs, the challenges they face, and how we can utilize technology to solve those issues for them."

"We thought as a company that we would take that to the next level through this certification. It signifies our understanding not only of technology but its business implications for our clients in the hospitality industry. We're happy to be able to present to our clients that we have a certified professional on staff."

## Ultimate Achievement

Jointly developed by HFTP and the Educational Institute of the AH&LA, the CHTP designation is the ultimate achievement in hospitality IT. The HFTP has administered more than 1,000 exams since the program began in 1994, and about 200 hospitality professionals are actively certified.

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Obtaining the CHTP begins with an application process. Applicants must have several years of proven experience within the hospitality industry and actively participate in meetings and educational programs pertinent to the field. The applicant must also present a letter of recommendation and ultimately be able to pass an exam.

"The exam is broken up into segments covering technology concepts, technologies and applications specific to hotels and private clubs, and the ability to manage that technology — to act as the CTO and provide assistance with budgeting and strategic decisions. It is designed to determine that you really understand the industry," Triumph said.

"Professionals who have the CHTP designation must maintain 60

continuing education points over the course of two years. You have to stay up to date on the various advances in the industry."

## Solid Background

Triumph has dedicated much of her career to both the hospitality and technology industries. Through her consultative, hands-on approach to client needs, she has learned how hospitality organizations operate, what technologies they use and what their challenges are. By combining this understanding with her knowledge of technology, she is able to provide her clients with unique insight and end-to-end support.

Triumph sees many exciting opportunities with technology in the hospitality sector. She believes advances in mobility, collaborative technologies, RFID and other solutions are changing the way hotels and private clubs serve and interact with their customers.

"These solutions are enabling staff at private clubs to have all the information they need at their fingertips so they can focus on providing, a tailored, unique experience to their members," she said. "There are mobile solutions that enable club members to access information about events and services from any device. So technology provides not only a network and applications for staff but enables exciting new things that clubs can offer their members."

## Would Your Business Survive?

*Data backup and recovery are critical to any disaster recovery plan. Atlantic-IT.net can help reduce your business risk through its managed backup offerings.*

It doesn't take a hurricane or fire to devastate a business. A leaky roof, security breach or even human error can cause a devastating loss of critical data. And as data is created at a faster and faster pace, the problem only gets worse. Technology research firm IDC predicts that by 2020 organizations will have 50 times more information than they have today.

Backup is your best hedge against data loss, but many businesses manage backups poorly. Data is backed up irregularly if at all. Data restoration processes are never tested. Backup media are kept in the same place as the company's computer systems or, worse, taken "offsite" to someone's home. These organizations might hope for the best but they're not prepared for the worst.

Atlantic-IT.net offers a variety of alternatives designed to help customers be prepared for disaster and less susceptible to downtime. Atlantic-IT.net's managed backup portfolio includes onsite, offsite and cloud-based options that transfer the data storage, backup and disaster recovery burden to our highly trained and experienced engineers. Atlantic-IT.net is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to ensure that critical data is secure and can be quickly restored if needed — all while reducing your IT overhead costs.

So uncross your fingers, put down that rabbit's foot and call Atlantic-IT.net. Shifting your data backup and recovery functions to Atlantic-IT.net protects against disaster, maximizes data availability and lowers overall business risk.

### Technology Horizons

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#### *Editorial Correspondence:*

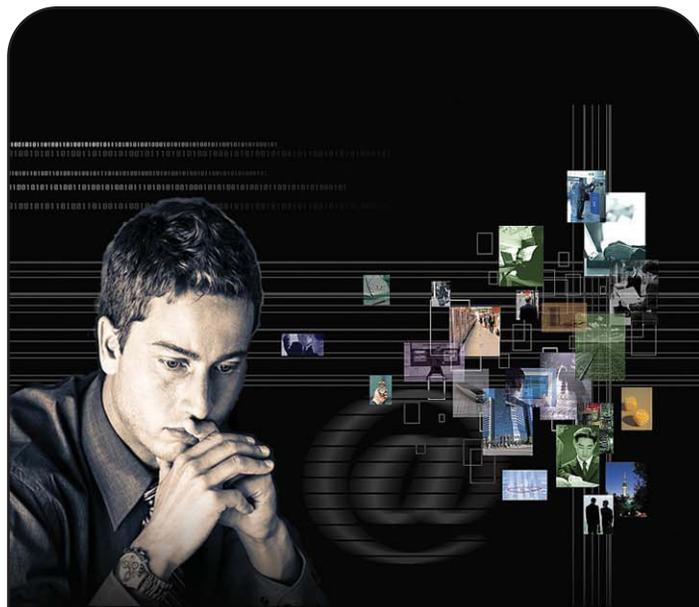
4941 S. 78th E. Ave., Tulsa, OK 74145

Phone (800) 726-7667 • Fax (918) 270-7134

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## Disaster Recovery: Are you ready for trouble?

Atlantic-IT.net can help ease your mind and ensure that you don't lose critical data in the event of a disaster.

Our Backup and Disaster Recovery solution consists of a dedicated device that backs up critical data as often as every 15 minutes, and a 24x7 monitoring and management service that ensures the system is operating efficiently. Our solution also transmits updated backups to two national data centers located more than 100 miles apart to ensure redundancy and failover.

Our solution is ideal for comprehensive, cost-effective business continuance. We can dramatically improve your disaster preparedness while simplifying operations and avoiding the high cost of traditional replication solutions. Contact us today to learn more.



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# Flirting with CHANGE

*Many organizations are falling head over heels for thin-client and zero-client computing. Is it a match for your environment?*

**T**hin, uncomplicated, reliable and secure. Suitable for long-term relationship.

Sure, that could describe a personals ad on craigslist. But it is also a fairly accurate representation of thin-client computing. A recent Thin Client Vendor Landscape report, published by Info-Tech Research Group, predicts thin clients will continue to entice enterprises away from traditional desktops because of their security and cost benefits. Thin clients are less expensive, are more reliable and generally require less power than PCs.

“Going thin is about more than saving on electricity bills — the projected benefits go well beyond that. But cost is one benefit businesses are unlikely to ignore,” said Laura Hansen-Kohls, senior research analyst for Info-Tech Research Group.

Thin clients are the ideal partners for desktop virtualization solutions, in which the desktop environment, applications and data reside on a centralized server. A thin client

has its own memory, processor and network connectivity but no hard drive — or any of the baggage that goes with it. IT is freed from the tasks of patching operating systems, installing and updating applications, and ensuring that data is protected on each and every desktop. And as they face the prospect of upgrading to Windows 7 and/or Windows 8, more organizations may embrace the thin-client alternative.

However, there is a fresh face in town that is attracting a lot of attention. So-called zero-client or ultra-thin-client solutions take thin-client computing to the next level. Which will win the hearts of desktop administrators?

## **A Lot of Experience**

Thin clients have been around for a while. In fact, the thin-client computing concept grew out of the old mainframe environment, in which “dumb terminals” provided the interface to centralized applications. And “interface” pretty much describes a thin client’s function. In essence, a thin client accepts the user’s keystrokes and mouse movements and

sends them to the application, then accepts the application's video output and displays it for the user.

Thin clients began seeing renewed interest as relief for the high cost of PC management and support, but their mainframe legacy tarnished their reputation somewhat. Critics saw them as character-oriented devices unsuited to today's graphics-intensive environment. It takes more processing power and bandwidth to process graphics, and more still to handle multimedia, offsetting some of the benefits of thin-client computing.

However, thin clients have continued to evolve along with the marketplace. The leading manufacturers of thin-client solutions offer an array of options suited to a variety of end-user and application requirements. Some support Windows and Linux operating systems as well as specialized "thin" OSs. The most powerful provide support for voice, video and rich media, multiple displays, wireless connectivity, and more. These solutions provide a robust end-user experience while enabling organizations to capitalize on desktop virtualization.

### **Low Maintenance**

Of course, not every end-user needs those kinds of features. If the key is to minimize desktop acquisition and administration costs, it's important to select the simplest device for each application. And with no memory, processor or operating system, the zero client is about as uncomplicated as it gets.

The zero client is essentially a connectivity device optimized for the desktop virtualization environment. Zero-client solutions include software that runs inside each user's virtualized desktop and routes data to and from a zero-client device, which typically includes an Ethernet jack, a VGA plug, audio input and output connections and USB connectors for input devices. Direct connectivity between the zero client and the host software eliminates the need for network protocols that can increase network overhead and degrade performance.

Zero clients offer all of the benefits of thin clients, with a lower cost per unit. What's more, zero clients consume much less power than their thin client and PC counterparts — some as little as three watts.

Neither thin clients nor zero clients are right for everyone. They're not sufficient for power users who need to do a lot of local processing with applications, for example. But for many organizations seeking to control costs, improve security, reduce energy consumption and streamline desktop management, thin-client and zero-client computing is a match made in heaven.



Smaller companies without fulltime IT personnel on staff often find they are constantly "putting out fires" related to technology. This constant troubleshooting often results in a loss of business focus, not to mention substandard technology solutions.

Atlantic-IT.net can help you beat the heat. Our comprehensive technology services and support offerings can ensure that you:

- avoid unnecessary downtime that affects customer service & deliverables as well as employee productivity;
- control technology costs with quarterly level payments that eliminate the shock of escalating invoices;
- remain virus free to keep your network running smoothly;
- get value for your technology dollars by having the expertise of Microsoft Certified professionals on your side;
- enjoy unlimited help desk and technical assistance;
- receive impartial advice on hardware and software purchases;
- retain documentation on everything technology related in your organization.



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# ENABLING REMOTE ACCESS

Today's mobile employees need remote access, but what's the best way to provide it — RDP or VPN?



**Y**ou can't blame IT managers for wanting to lock down access to the network, given the endless barrage of sophisticated security threats they must attempt to thwart. However, increasing numbers of mobile employees need anytime, anywhere access to mission-critical applications and data. Organizations must find ways to provide that access without compromising security.

There are a number of ways to connect to the company network from outside. Two of the most common methods are Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) and Virtual Private Networking (VPN). Many people tend to think they're the same because they accomplish the same goal. However, there are major differences between the two and which you choose depends upon a number of factors.

## A Tale of Two Protocols

RDP was developed by Microsoft and has been included with every version of Windows starting with Windows 2000. It allows a user to access and control a specific remote computer. The user can view the remote desktop, control the keyboard and mouse, run applications and access data located on that computer's hard drives. The user may be able to access open network resources connected to that computer but not necessarily all of that computer's network connections.

With RDP, only screens are transmitted from the remote computer — files and applications are accessed locally on the network by the remote machine. As long as you have sufficient bandwidth, RDP is a low-cost, easy-to-use method for accessing a remote desktop.

VPN is very different. A VPN enables access to an organization's private network by establishing a secure connection over a public network such as the Internet. Those network resources may or may not include the hard drive of a particular machine. Files and applications are transferred over the VPN connection for processing on the local machine running the VPN client.

There are two types of VPNs: remote access VPNs and site-to-site VPNs. Remote access VPNs enable one user to access the network from any location with Internet access. Site-to-site VPNs enable multiple users in a fixed remote location, such as a branch office, to connect to the network.

## Into the Tunnel

VPNs establish encrypted "tunnels" for communication over the public Internet, providing end-users with highly secure access to network resources as if they were physically connected to the corporate LAN. Traditionally, companies used VPNs based upon the IP Security (IPSec) suite of protocols. However, IPSec VPNs require that client software be installed on the end-user's machine — software that is notoriously difficult for the IT department to manage and the end-user to operate. In addition, IPSec VPNs often

require a special firewall configuration to allow public IP addresses to come through.

SSL-VPN technology makes secure remote access easier for both end-users and network administrators. It combines Secure Sockets Layer — the encryption and authentication technology built into every Web browser — with access control, policy enforcement and other tools to create secure connections via the public Internet. SSL-VPNs come with fewer headaches than IPsec VPNs, making it easier for organizations to provide remote access without increasing security risks or IT support woes.

With SSL-VPNs, the remote user's interface is a standard Web browser. There's no learning curve because almost all users are familiar with browsers, and the IT department doesn't have to install and maintain any client software. What's more, the end-user can access the network from any Internet-connected device.

### Complementary Solutions

RDP and VPN have different sets of advantages and disadvantages. The latest RDP solutions encrypt data and can be fairly secure if strong passwords are used. However, RDP can be subject to a so-called "man-in-the-middle" attack in which a hacker tricks the remote machine into providing the user's credentials. An RDP connection can also be quite slow, making it nearly impossible to use in situations with low-bandwidth or lots of network traffic, and difficult to troubleshoot when things go wrong. On the other hand, RDP would be a faster solution for applications that require large files to be transferred.

VPNs are easier to troubleshoot and enable access to multiple resources on the network. Because they validate the server through certificates, they are not subject to man-in-the-middle attacks. Every file the user accesses needs to be transferred over the VPN connection to the local machine, and the need to encrypt and decrypt data makes a VPN slower than the LAN. On the other hand, only network resources rely on the VPN connection; all the work is done by the local machine.

Security concerns notwithstanding, RDP is a great tool for giving end-users remote access. As a result, organizations often combine the two technologies to provide greater security and more flexibility. This solution is also preferable if multiple users need remote access.

As mobility continues to increase, organizations need to find ways to give employees remote access to resources within the network. Armed with an understanding of the differences between RDP and VPN, organizations can choose the right remote access technologies to meet business needs and security requirements.

## Mobile Technologies Raise New Concerns

In today's "post-PC" world, businesses of all sizes, as well as policy makers at all levels, need to be ready to address and manage increasing security and privacy challenges. That's the finding of a panel of experts — including several dozen policy makers, security and privacy experts, and technology advocates — who participated in a recent mobile security briefing and discussion conducted by CompTIA, the IT industry association.

"Mobile technologies are helping to increase productivity and competitiveness, they are a terrific platform for innovation, but we must also consider the vulnerabilities that mobility introduces and be prepared to address them," said Todd Thibodeaux, president and chief executive officer, CompTIA. "With more companies adopting a 'BYOD' or bring your own device policy, it's more critical than ever that businesses and policy makers consider the security and privacy implications of these actions."

According to a recent CompTIA study, more than 70 percent of IT staff surveyed cited security considerations as the greatest risk involved in supporting mobility. As mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets extend both the physical and temporal boundaries of the workplace, businesses are under increasing pressure to create new policies and procedures to keep the mobile enterprise accessible, available and secure.

"We're seeing greater awareness in the enterprise space of the need to protect both company-issued and personal devices. However, a major effort is needed in education, research and industry collaboration to counter the rising threats to mobile security," said Andrew Hoog, chief executive officer, viaForensics.

"Mobile devices and working in a mobile environment opens up new vulnerabilities, particularly in the area of privacy. Having clear industry best practices can help establish guidelines for and encourage good, pro-consumer behaviors," said Allan Friedman, PhD, research director for the Center for Technology Innovation at Brookings Institution.

The CompTIA study found that 84 percent of those surveyed use their smartphones for light work such as email or web browsing, while tablets had even wider range of uses. CompTIA regularly benchmarks business attitudes, purchase plans and technology preferences to help inform the business strategy of its member companies and public policy development.

# Rise above your technology limitations



Keeping up with the multitude of new developments in hardware, software and infrastructure can be overwhelming for IT staffs that are already stretched thin. Atlantic-IT.net can help.

Atlantic-IT.net is a full-service IT solutions provider that designs, implements and supports integrated voice and data communication solutions for businesses and government agencies.

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