

## Electronics Manufacturer Calls On Visual Intercept for a Variety of Issue Management Applications

**Patton Electronics** is a leading manufacturer of network access and connectivity products, including dial-up and dedicated access servers, network termination units, modems, interface converters and surge protectors. Boosted by the enormous success of their Remote Access Server (RAS) product and the recent acquisition of a product line from a competitor, Patton has experienced steady growth during the past couple of years, achieving profitability even as many other companies in the industry were forced to shut their doors.

One productivity solution that has helped Patton achieve its success is Elsinore Technologies' Visual Intercept issue management software. Having used Visual Intercept in the past to log and track technical support incidents, Patton is leveraging the expanded functionality and ease of use of Web-based Visual Intercept Enterprise Version 3.0 to streamline and improve its product validation, manufacturing and IT support processes.

### *Bug tracking solution supports call center operation*

Visual Intercept was originally designed to track bugs during software development; however, as Andria Legon, Senior IP Support Engineer, discovered when she came on board with Patton in March, 2000, the tech support group was using the software in a tech support call center application, and she was responsible for managing and upgrading the implementation.

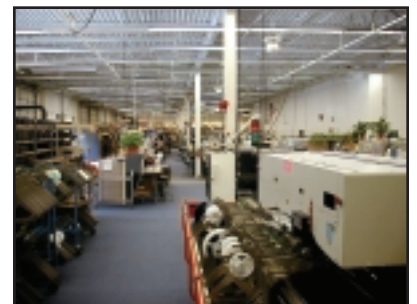
As an additional challenge, Legon was also faced with a call and e-mail volume that had risen substantially since the Visual Intercept solution was first installed. "When I started here a

*be in the know*



### **AT A GLANCE**

- Produces network access and connectivity products
- 180 employees
- Based in Gaithersburg, MD



couple of years ago, we were receiving about 10 technical support calls each week,” says Legon. “Now, we receive closer to 40 calls and e-mails each day, and that number is rising steadily.”

After trying a strictly project-based approach to tracking technical support calls and managing the resulting work, Legon developed a more efficient system in which two projects are created and associated with each product: one project tracks bugs and the other logs calls. By clicking on a bug, Patton’s technical support personnel can see every case that bug is attached to, enabling them to gauge the importance of each one and prioritize their responses accordingly. Alternatively, they can associate contacts with incidents to determine quickly whether a customer has had a similar problem before and, if so, how it was resolved, decreasing issue resolution time.

“Visual Intercept’s logical, project-oriented hierarchy has been extremely helpful in this application,” Legon comments.

Adapting a solution that had been designed specifically for bug tracking to a technical support application was challenging with the previous version of Visual Intercept, says Legon, and, in fact, she started exploring other solutions for logging and tracking technical support issues. However, with the release of Visual Intercept Enterprise 3.0, which was designed not just for bug tracking but also for managing a variety of issues across the enterprise, Legon’s job got a lot easier.



***“OUR SUCCESS IS DEPENDENT ON GOOD COMMUNICATIONS AND COLLABORATION AMONG OUR ENGINEERS, PRODUCT MANAGERS AND TECH SUPPORT, AND VISUAL INTERCEPT IS THAT COMMUNICATIONS BRIDGE.”***

**David Dibert**  
Director of Technical Services  
Patton Electronics

“With the new features and functionality in Visual Intercept Enterprise 3.0, we are getting a lot more out of Visual Intercept in our tech support application,” says Legon.

These features include:

- **Customized tabs:** Using tabs they created for IP addresses, technical support personnel can log into the program and click on the appropriate tab to immediately log into a customer’s network with their permission.
- **VBA reporting capability:** Legon and her team can quickly and easily create customized reports from the VBA development platform located within the Visual Intercept application.
- **Incident-to-incident mapping:** Multiple customer cases often have a distinct relationship with software defects; for example, when two customers have the same problem because of a minor defect in the software. Visual Intercept’s incident-to-incident mapping capability allows Patton to link these issues so that they can quickly and easily determine which customer cases will be resolved by updated software.
- **E-mail notifications:** Based on user-defined parameters, internal users are notified of events as they occur via e-mail, allowing Patton to resolve issues more quickly and keeping technical support and product managers informed about the status of their customer issues.

“As our volume of tech support calls and e-mails continues to increase, everyone in the company is realizing the value of having a tracking system in place that provides instant access to customer and incident information,” says David Dibert, Director of Technical Services.

### *Streamlining the product validation process*

Patton personnel are also using Visual Intercept Enterprise to track bugs during the product validation process, and have found the software invaluable in facilitating communications among the technical support, product management and engineering groups. According to Andy Stites, Lead Product Validation Engineer, technical support personnel log defects into Visual Intercept and a product manager prioritizes these defects, providing engineers with direction as to which project to work on next. Once engineers have made fixes to the product, technical support personnel test them. Throughout the process, product managers are notified via e-mail about the status of their projects. All of this information is managed in Visual Intercept Enterprise.

“Without a comprehensive defect tracking system in place, knowledge left the company when the engineers who made the changes left,” Stites says. “Visual Intercept not only provides historical records of all the bugs that were identified and fixed, it has outstanding search capabilities that allow us to locate specific information quickly and easily.” Users can search for information based on type of incident, customer, product or any number of other user-defined criteria.



## **BENEFITS**

- Better communication and collaboration among internal teams and with customers
- Faster response to and resolution of issues
- Helps decrease production costs while increasing manufacturing throughput

While he and his group used Visual Intercept Desktop 2.0 for this application prior to March of 2002, Stites says that the introduction of Visual Intercept Enterprise 3.0, a highly flexible Web-based product with a more user-friendly interface, has significantly increased its acceptance and use as a productivity tool. “The goal is for all of the engineers to use Visual Intercept as their reporting tool, rather than referring back to a bunch of different e-mails,” says Stites. “Since we implemented Version 3.0, which is much more intuitive and, being Web-based, more collaborative, I’ve seen more and more engineers using Visual Intercept for reporting.”

### *Manufacturing and beyond*

“Based on the success we’ve had using Visual Intercept in our product validation process, as well as its increasingly successful application in our tech support call center, we are excited about implementing it to a greater extent in our manufacturing operations and as an IT support tool,” says Dibert. “These groups heard about the great results we were having with Visual Intercept in the product validation area and asked if they could use it for their internal requirements.”

Dibert has started implementing Visual Intercept in manufacturing to help decrease production costs while increasing throughput. From a form, fit and function standpoint, Dibert explains, Revision A and B of the same board might be identical; however, from a manufacturing standpoint, Rev B might be less expensive and faster to produce. “If someone is doing a board spin that week and you send him an e-mail asking him to make the change to Rev B, he’ll do it,” Dibert says. “But, if no board spin is scheduled for six months, chances are he’ll forget to make this change, and any cost and productivity benefits will be lost. Using Visual Intercept Enterprise ensures that these change requests are logged and implemented.”

Dibert sees Visual Intercept Enterprise as an important tool in Patton’s continued growth as it supports existing markets and explores new ones. “Our success is dependent on good communications and collaboration among our engineers, product managers and tech support, and Visual Intercept is that communications bridge,” says Dibert. The next step: extending the use of Visual Intercept externally to help resolve customer issues. “Allowing our customers to enter and track incidents directly via Visual Intercept will provide them with the real-time status of their cases while ensuring that nothing falls through the cracks on our end.”

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### **About Patton**

Patton Electronics Company is a U.S. manufacturer and marketer of network access and connectivity products, including Remote Access Products (V.92,V.90, K56Flex, V.34+, and ISDN dial-in), Last Mile/Local Loop Access Products (T1, E1, and xDSL modems, NTUs and CSU/DSUs), Multi-Service Access Products (Voice, Intranet, Extranet, and Frame Relay access), cPCI solutions and Connectivity Products (interface converters, short range modems, multiplexers, and data line surge protectors). Patton Electronics is an ISO-9001 certified and BABT-approved manufacturer. Patton products are CE marked. For more information, visit [www.patton.com](http://www.patton.com).

### **About Visual Intercept**

Visual Intercept provides a scalable and customizable solution for tracking defects, feature requests and outstanding issues. Integrated with Microsoft Project, Office, BackOffice, and all Developer Tools, Visual Intercept is a productivity solution for the Microsoft tools user. The Visual Intercept product suite includes: Visual Intercept Enterprise, Visual Intercept Project, Visual Intercept Web, Visual Intercept Web Relay, and the Visual Intercept SDK.

### **About Elsinore Technologies, Inc.**

Elsinore Technologies, Inc., [www.elsitech.com](http://www.elsitech.com), is a Research Triangle Park-based company that was founded in 1995 to address the need of software developers to solve problems in a structured way. Elsinore Technologies’ Visual Intercept software now provides the industry’s only enterprise issue management solution that was designed from the ground up to integrate with all Microsoft development and productivity tools. The company’s mission is to deliver enterprise-class issue management solutions that combine out-of-the-box capabilities, an intuitive, project-oriented interface, and robust extensibility. With thousands of customers in 35 countries, Elsinore Technologies’ 100% commitment to customer success continues to benefit companies seeking the best in enterprise issue management solutions.