Ascend

CastNet

User Profile

CastNet® At-A-Glance

Challenge

Build a city-wide Virtual Private Network (VPN) linking casting directors, talent agents and actors. Solution must support a wide range of multimedia data services including streaming audio and video, IP voice, e-commerce and fax applications. Also, must be flexible, cost-effective and scalable to accommodate a growing number of users.

The Ascend Solution

Provide high-speed ISDN and Frame Relay access to the CastNet VPN from each user's office using Ascend MultiVPN products including MAX™ 400X WAN access concentrators, Pipeline® 75 and Pipeline 130 remote access routers.

Benefits

The easy to configure Ascend MAX 400X platform provides flexible connectivity options and scalability. The Pipeline family of routers gives end users high-speed, reliable access to the CastNet VPN. Overall, the Ascend MultiVPN solution is more cost-effective than competing solutions.



Ascend Products

Pipeline 130 remote access routers
Pipeline 75 remote access routers
MAX 400X WAN access concentrators

Behind the glitz and glamour of every Hollywood production, there is a frenzy of talent agents, casting directors and other entertainment professionals searching for actors to fit various roles. In Southern California's entertainment industry, where connections are everything, being cast for a leading role often depends on having the right agent or knowing the right casting director. CastNet, a state-of-the-art online casting network developed by Only Multimedia Network, Inc., is helping to connect talent agents, casting directors and more than 30,000 actors together over the Internet. Using Ascend MultiVPN products, CastNet has built a

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The Ascend Solution



MAX 400X

The Ascend MAX 400X WAN access concentrator helps organizations build remote networks of any size, with virtually any combination of analog and digital carrier services. All MAX products combine the functionality of a router, a terminal server, a switch and an access concentrator in a single box with integrated VPN features.



Pipeline 130

The Ascend Pipeline is a family of dedicated and dial-up remote access routers designed for enterprise sites with expanding VPN and Internet connectivity needs or remote offices connecting to the enterprise LAN. The Pipeline 130 router provides an easy migration path from ISDN to Frame Relay or dedicated leased-line services as well as backup for mission-critical applications.

city-wide Virtual Private Network (VPN) that incorporates streaming video and audio, IP voice, e-commerce and fax applications onto a secure IP network. With CastNet, actors can post resumes, photos, audio samples and video clips onto the system. Casting directors can upload notices or "breakdowns" detailing the various roles that must be filled for theatre productions, films, television shows and commercials. Agents use the system to review casting directors' needs and then find potential actors to match these needs.

Paperless Casting

Previously, casting directors relied solely on a paper-based, courier networking system to find potential actors. Sifting through hundreds of thousands of profiles, photos and resumes faxed or sent to them by courier was not only extremely time-consuming, but it was neither efficient nor cost-effective.

"The original goal of CastNet was to provide a gateway between casting directors and actors," explains Octavio Gallardo, CastNet systems administrator. "We wanted to build a system that would not only link the entertainment industry, but also, it would save users time and money."

CastNet needed a way to connect with the remote offices of casting directors and talent agents and provide them with Internet access to more than 30,000 actors. Using Internet technology, CastNet has built a secure VPN linking entertainment professionals throughout Hollywood and surrounding areas.

"We chose a VPN over a public network because we didn't want to limit access to the network. With a VPN, our actors, agents and casting directors can log onto the CastNet network from anywhere in the world with any ISP," says Gallardo. "And, we've eliminated the need for costly leased lines and long-distance calls."

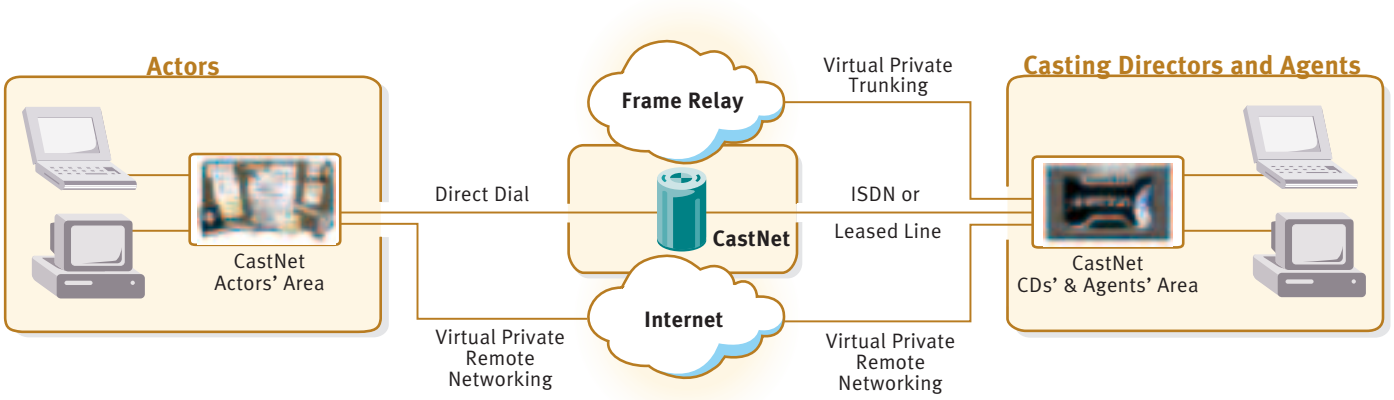
Ascend in Leading Role

To accommodate the hundreds of directors and agents using the network, CastNet installed a fiber bay with three DS3 connections and three MAX 400X access concentrators. Each MAX 400X connects to two T1 lines, on which users' ISDN and Frame Relay connections terminate, and supports up to 48 concurrent sessions.

CastNet hosts an additional three MAX 400Xs, also located in Southern California, to support the thousands of actors who dial in to CastNet to edit resumes, upload photos and obtain portions of scripts to be read at auditions.

"The MAX 400X provides us with more than enough bandwidth for our current applications as well as future needs," says Gallardo. "And, with the MAX 400X's scalable architecture, we can add more T1 lines as needed."

The CastNet MultiVPN Network



CastNet used Ascend MultiVPN products to develop a state-of-the-art VPN, connecting casting directors, agents and actors.

CastNet treats the offices of casting directors and talent agents as remote offices connecting to central resources over a corporate WAN infrastructure. For remote users, CastNet installs a Pipeline 75 remote access router giving directors and agents fast, reliable access to the CastNet VPN as well as dual analog interfaces for combining a telephone, fax or modem onto a single high-speed digital ISDN line. For larger users, CastNet installs a Pipeline 130, providing both ISDN and Frame Relay interfaces for high-speed access to CastNet multimedia applications. Because the Pipeline 130 supports both ISDN and Frame Relay, the most cost-effective WAN option can be selected for each casting director or talent agent, depending on usage levels and local ISDN and Frame Relay tariffs.

"Our VPN's strength is in the Ascend MultiVPN solution which includes Pipeline and MAX products," explains Gallardo. "We looked at competing products, but Ascend Pipelines are the only routers on the market with integrated CSU/DSU, and they provide the best price/performance ratio. In addition, Ascend has always given us the support we need. There's no other vendor in this market that offers the level of support that Ascend does."

CastNet Overview

CastNet (http://www.castnet.com), a division of Only Multimedia Network Inc. (http://only.com), is a virtual private network currently being used in southern California by more than 220 casting directors, 100 Screen Actors Guild franchised talent agencies and more than 30,000 actors. Casting directors and talent agents dial directly into the system to access electronic talent searches, agency talent submissions, actor submissions and much more, while actors can go to a password-protected Internet site and communicate with the industry as well as download various actor marketing tools.

The Ascend Solution



Pipeline 75

The award-winning Ascend Pipeline products provide a variety of remote access solutions for Internet access, remote offices, home offices and telecommuters. The Pipeline 75 supports high-speed ISDN BRI communications for stand-alone PCs and PC/LANs and includes support for analog devices.

A Future Role for Ascend

According to Gallardo, CastNet is very pleased with its new VPN, which is in the process of being expanded. “We have lots of plans for the future of CastNet,” says Gallardo. “Right now we are expanding our VPN to include Chicago and later this year, New York.”

Ascend MultiVPN solutions will continue to play a leading role as CastNet expands its services throughout the country. Utilizing its existing investment in Ascend technology, CastNet will expand its infrastructure to include core switching from Ascend, improving performance and reliability and paving the way for new Internet applications and growth.

“We’ve used Ascend equipment from the beginning,” explains Gallardo. “We’ve looked at other vendors’ products, and they just don’t stack up to Ascend. Ascend equipment has always been reliable, and I’ve never encountered support quite like the support we’ve received from Ascend.”

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