

Service and Support Automation

*Addressing Software Solution
Problems in Today's Technology*



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In order to be competitive in today's market, IT organizations must be up-to-date with developments in technology. Faster and better programs and equipment are constantly being developed to increase productivity, but when technology breaks down or when human error interferes with production, the costs can be considerable. The repercussions of down-time due to technological problems consist of lost data, lost sales, reduced customer satisfaction, the cost of repairing the problem, and lost time spent on correcting a problem - time that could have otherwise been used on production.

Support automation is a software solution that empowers enterprises to diagnose and resolve problems with their technology. More importantly, it helps prevent these problems from occurring at all. Service and support automation performs four major tasks for the IT organization and its customers:

- **Mass-healing** – With mass-healing the IT organization can send updates, repairs, scripts, and patches to many PCs at once. Additionally, the IT organization can define customers by group, sending it to selected groups at the same time.
- **Self-healing** - Self-healing diagnoses which applications have ceased to function and corrects the problem.
- **Self-service** – Self-service empowers users to resolve their own problems by providing them with the tools they need through detailed and easy to follow guided resolutions. Users can quickly find the information they need to repair non-functioning applications, restore settings, reset passwords, and run patches and repairs of their choosing.
- **Live support** – Enhanced, live support is also available for those users who want personal contact. Assisted-service software compliments this service by providing information about the user's system, his problem and questions, and other pertinent information to the IT organization's support personnel.

Potential users of support automation have many questions about its applications, costs, and benefits for their company. This document answers many of these questions and demonstrates how Fine Points Technologies' innovative products can increase the productivity and profitability of your enterprise.

What are the differences between self-service call-tracking and self-service support automation?



Many companies already have self-service call tracking and do not see the need for support automation because they think it is more or less the same thing. Support automation provides the benefits of call-tracking and goes beyond the limited benefits of call-tracking to provide more extensive services.

Self Service Call-Tracking


- Designed to log user problems and monitor analyst productivity
- Allows users to type in their own information
- Helps detect problems but does not often solve them

Self-Service Support Automation (picks up the information from call-tracking and..)

- Gives the users the tools they need to self-troubleshoot and self-repair issues without the need to contact the help desk.
- Provides the user's system information automatically to the support personnel, if a user needs assistance
- Enables the help desk technicians to remotely repair the subscriber's desktop.

There is a wide misconception that customers won't use self-service support automation – that live support is the recommended approach to resolving technical issues. Today's generation is receptive to self-service. They grew up with automated teller machines, self service checkouts, and a myriad of Internet conveniences, including online banking, shopping, and hotel and plane reservations. Self service support makes sense to them, and they appreciate the convenience of being able to resolve their own problems rather than having stay on the telephone for long periods while waiting for a response from support desk personnel. For those users who are a little more reluctant to use automated services to perform self-repairs, support automation provides the tools and information the help desk needs to solve their problems in a much more efficient and economical manner.

What are the differences between a standard knowledge base and self-service support automation?



Standard knowledge bases are not problem solvers. Most users find that using them is time-consuming and often results in unsolved problems and frustration. The issue with knowledge bases is that too much or too little information is provided; too much if the user types in a brief description, too little or none if the problem is explained in detail.

Standard Knowledge Base

- Provides solutions for all machines, operating systems and applications when a user types in a problem.
- Uses search algorithms that find as many matches as possible for the keywords, even those that would not apply to the user's system.

Self-Service Support Automation

- Scans the user's machine to identify the operating system, email application, and user
- Uses this information to filter the results of the search.
- Provides a solution to the problem in a short list of possibilities, or lets the user quickly know that the solution is not available in the data base.

Fine Points Technologies' Self-Repair Technician™ reduces ongoing support costs by empowering subscribers to self-repair common desktop configuration issues and resolve common support drivers. Self-Repair Technician delivers this technology through a user-friendly, diagnostic tool that resides on the subscriber's desktop. If and when the subscriber requires technical assistance with his broadband connection, he can launch the Self-Repair Technician from his desktop. The Self-Repair Technician identifies the cause of the problem and automatically resolves it, making it easy and cost-effective to deliver quality support that improves both subscriber experience and satisfaction.

The Self-Repair Technician can be paired with the optional Remote Technician™. Remote Technician™ is designed to minimize help desk call resolution time by empowering the help desk technician with detailed information about the subscriber's CPE and remote desktop control capability.

How can Self-Service Support Automation Save My Company Money?



Support automation is a multi-purpose solution that enhances the performance of the support activities of IT enterprises and provides support in cost-efficient ways that many current solutions cannot. Sup-

port automation software can save money by offering more efficient and effective alternatives to many IT functions, by providing one solution for many problems to avoid the costs and problems of integrating multiple programs, and by meeting the needs of the individual user whether he needs self-service, live assistance, or remote repairs.

More Efficient and Effective Alternatives to Many IT Functions

Support automation performs a myriad of functions: it reduces the amount of time and labor that your employees spend on support tasks, it reduces recurring support calls, and it greatly reduces truck rolls. Service and support automation can also improve the efficiency of the following IT functions:

- Automated Self-Repair
- System Data Recovery
- Virus Attack Recovery
- Service Diagnostics & Resolutions
- Issue Routing
- Call Tracking
- Help Desk Interface
- Service Request Management
- Remote Diagnostics
- Remote Repair
- Direct to Desktop Messaging
- Chat
- Direct-to-Desktop Software Updates
- Patches & Updates
- License Management
- Software License Management
- Software Metering
- Software Distribution
- Wireless Configuration
- Wireless Support
- Mobile Device Support
- Connection Management
- Email Response Management
- Knowledgebase Authoring
- Content Authoring
- Application Development
- Password Reset
- Provisioning
- SLA Management
- Support Analytics

Fine Points Technologies' scalable support automation solutions and technologies empower service providers to reduce technical support costs as they acquire and manage new subscribers while increasing profitability through the provisioning and management of new digital services.

One Solution for Many Problems

Many companies deal with users' problems as they emerge by finding inexpensive solutions for each issue. The problem with this one time fix is that it has hidden costs. There are other expenses in addition to the costs of deployment: an increase in potential points of failure for the different programs as they are integrated with the existing system and each other, limited scalability because of possible incompatibility with future upgrades and additional software, training needed for the support personnel, and the inability to measure the benefits of each program. Fine Points Technologies addresses all these issues, by providing a complete package of fully integrated solutions that provide for your company's immediate and future needs.

Fine Points Technologies provides a solution for many problems in one package that can easily be integrated with your system. Through solutions that encompass the entire subscriber lifecycle from installation (Step 1), through customer care and retention (Step 2), and finally to service delivery and management (Step 3), Fine Point Technologies empowers Digital Service Providers to streamline their entire subscriber lifecycle management process.

As the industry continues to evolve, new technologies will emerge that will be beneficial your service. Our scalable solutions are built upon our patent-pending Direct Plug-in Technology™ that enables us to quickly and easily "plug-in" new features and third-party functionality without the complications of modifying source code. Most importantly this same technology enables us to easily enable or disable features in our products. Therefore, you can select the features and functionality that best meet the needs of your service.

Fine Point Technologies offers customized training programs to bring your staff up to speed on your solution. Through Fine Point's SupportPoint offering we offer onsite or offsite training to support our solutions. Our "train the trainer methodology" is well regarded in the industry. Train the Trainer is an interactive program that engages participants by focusing on their learning requirements and matching those needs with the project objectives and business requirements. Participants will be prepared to deliver training sessions back to their Customer Service Representatives (CSR) using the methods Fine Point Technologies provides. Each member who attends the training classes will leave the class having learned how to solve challenges rather than just deliver activities.

A critical part of all Fine Point Technologies solutions is our SupportPoint™ partnership that provides your company with a relationship with a dedicated project engineer and solution architect who participate with you in regular help desk reviews. This means that together with your help desk and product management and marketing teams, we analyze and review the results of the solution on continual basis to determine how it can be best optimized to further improve the achieved results.

While other vendors simply deliver a solution, Fine Point Technologies partners with our customers to continually improve and modify their service by analyzing the results of and further optimizing the solution. With a single company providing all your solutions, the problems and the costs associated with deployment, integration, scalability, training, and measurability are greatly reduced, saving your company both time and money.

Meeting the Needs of the Individual User

Service and support automation provides for the needs of all customers from the expert to the novice. Every customer can find the problem-solving method he most comfortable with by choosing from several options: self repair, help desk assistance, or remote repair.

The most inexpensive option is self repair. By automating the support process, our solutions and technologies enable subscribers to self-repair common issues without contacting the help desk. Desktop issues are easily identified and quickly resolved with the simple click of a button!

For customers that need more personal support, our support automation solutions include complete help desk trouble ticketing management as well as "Chat" capabilities between the subscriber and help desk technician. Our help desk interface (trouble ticket reports) puts subscriber configuration and diagnostic data directly in front of the help desk technician. This interface will direct the subscriber on how to contact technical support for assistance and clearly identifies issues to the technician, drastically reducing call resolution time.

Finally, for the customer who requires repair done because he lacks the knowledge to implement the solution himself, Fine Point Technology's solutions offer the capability for help desk technicians to remotely repair the subscriber's desktop. This eliminates the need for subscriber to follow complex support instructions and allows the technician to perform the repair for them, thus further reducing call resolution time and eliminating costly truck rolls.

One of the most obvious impacts of our solutions at Fine Point Technologies is easily recognizable return-on-investment from the reduction of technical support and service administration costs. Through solutions that encompass the entire subscriber lifecycle from installation (Step 1) to service management (Step 3), Fine Point Technologies empowers Digital Service Providers to streamline their entire subscriber lifecycle management process. Our technologies empower Service Providers so that they no longer have to "roll trucks" or suffer from escalating support costs to activate new digital services. Our patent-pending technologies empower your service to cost effectively provision, manage, and profit from your subscribers. No other company offers such a broad range of technologies and solutions that address the entire subscriber lifecycle.

Can We Afford Service and Support Automation and How Much Time Will It Take to Deploy It?



A good support automation system is characterized by its adaptability and scalability. It should have the ability to start small and grow as a company's needs and customers increase. By evaluating your existing subscriber lifecycle management processes, Fine Point Technologies can reveal many areas where automation can significantly reduce support costs, increase subscriber satisfaction, and ultimately increase profitability.

Because no two service providers are alike, Fine Point Technologies works closely with your product management and support teams to identify elements of your existing subscriber management process that can be improved via automation. This enables Fine Point Technologies to address each of our customers' specific needs and to implement a solution that best fits his subscriber lifecycle management processes.

One major driver of success and profitability for Digital Service Providers is the ability to deliver rapid time-to-market for new services. Service Providers can not afford to be held up by integration and development times from their solution vendor. Our patent-pending technologies are key enablers for fast and efficient time to market. While other solution vendors may require up to twelve months or more for delivery of a fully integrated solution, Fine Point Technologies can provide fully localized, customized and integrated solutions in less than three months.

Fine Point Technologies has the expertise and resources to be able to scale from small to large projects, globally. Fine Point Professional Services works with you to define project deliverable schedules. And our support doesn't stop once your solution has been delivered. Our SupportPoint Partner Program is truly where Fine Point proves we are committed to the partnership. We do more than offer technical support;

we partner with you to perform regular technical reviews of your solutions within your help desk, making sure that your solution is operating at peak efficiency and effectiveness. We also give you access to our ever-growing database of functional enhancements for your products.

The cost of the support automation and speed of its deployment will depend on the needs of your company. If budget restrictions are an issue, it is possible to start on a small scale and slowly work up from there. By using Fine Point Technologies' deployment services, you can speed implementation, minimize deployment costs, mitigate risks, and swiftly realize the full value from your support automation solutions. When one considers the benefits of support automation the question no longer is "Can we afford it?" but "Can we afford not to implement it?"

What Other Functions Can Self-Service Support Automation Perform?



Self service support automation goes even further in providing solutions to problems in technology. A good service and support automation implementation should be capable of measuring the results of its various features and it should inform customers and keep them up-to-date on new developments.

Measuring Results

Like every other part of a service provider's business, the Help Desk must be reviewed regularly to determine if corrective measures are necessary to reduce expenses and ensure help desk effectiveness. Help desk managers look for faster ways to resolve common issues such as, connectivity problems, how to questions, password resets, outages, and service requests. In reviewing your help desk, Fine Point Technologies seeks to eliminate common issues so they don't occur at all. A Help Desk Review includes:

- A technical review of help desk and service call logs
- A technical review of your solutions
- Proposals and suggestions on how enhancements or other changes to existing licensed software may reduce support calls.
- SupportPoint™ Alerts

Our SupportPoint partnership provides the support you need to conduct helpdesk reviews to measure the effectiveness of your support automation. This type of partnership is critical in today's market place with issues that such as operating system service packs, viruses, and third-party anti-spam, anti-spyware, and firewall software that can drastically affect the help desk and subscriber experience. This partnership and our industry expertise ensure that any potential issues that affect the help desk can be addressed quickly, easily, and proactively.

Keeping Customers Informed

Direct Messenger™ empowers service providers with the ability to send one or more dynamic, personalized messages or bulletins directly to select subscribers' desktop. As new messages are constructed in the Direct Communications Server, their target audience defined, and they are activated selected subscribers are able to begin receiving these non-obtrusive messages in the lower right hand corner of their desktop. Once received, subscribers can either close the messages or optionally access more details about the messages.

Use of Direct Messenger creates a direct "opt-in" channel to the subscribers' desktop that allows service providers to notify subscribers of:

- Network Outages
- Service Announcements
- Emergency Situations
- Community Information
- Amber Alerts

Keeping customers informed and providing services that are easily accessible keep customers happy and loyal. Happy and informed customers are less likely to churn, driving recurring revenues leading to greater profitability.

How Will Our Employees Be Trained to Implement the Help Desk Support Features Provided by Self-Service Support Automation?




Your employees will need to be trained to implement the features of support automation, not only so they can use these features but also so that they can teach the customers how to use them. With proper training your help desk representatives will be strong supporters of the self-service automation solution. Fine Point Technologies offers customized training programs to bring your staff up to speed on your solution. Train the Trainer is a 2-3 day solution-intensive program that provides each participant with the tools and knowledge needed to use the technology which your company has chosen. Participants will learn to:

- Understand all aspects of the customized solution as well as how subscribers will interact with it.
- Provide their CSR's with real life experiences with the solution to better prepare them for the exact subscriber experience of the typical subscriber, who will be utilizing the solution.
- Construct training programs based upon most common issues subscribers have experienced prior to deploying the solution, as well as issues that may surface independently of the solution.
- Develop a training process that is easy to convey and deliver to each CSR.

The course can be customized for the varying levels of technology experience each CSR possesses. This training can be held around our client's availability, either prior to a field trial or full deployment.

Redefining the Solutions to Support Problems Using Fine Point Technologies



Industry change is inevitable. New technologies, viruses, and operating system updates emerge that can drastically affect help desk performance and call drivers. Service and support automation is the solution to the breakdown of technology that slows production. Your service needs a partner that can assist you with adapting to the market, and Fine Point Technologies is that partner.

Fine Point Technologies' support automation solutions and technologies empower ISP Providers to cost-effectively acquire and manage new subscribers. Since 1997, our solutions have proven to reduce technical support costs and increase service provider's profitability through the ability to provide and manage new digital services.

Our industry leading solutions that include self-installation, self-repair, and OSS service management minimize technical support costs and deliver superior subscriber experience. With solutions licensed to hundreds of service providers and deployed to over ten million subscribers worldwide, Fine Point Technologies is the proven choice for subscriber management solutions.

All of Fine Point Technologies solutions use our patent-pending technologies, enabling our solutions to be extremely flexible and modular. These technologies include:

- **RapiDeploy™ Intelligent Architecture** – An intelligent patent-pending software design philosophy which allows all of our solutions to be totally customizable without the complication of recompiling the source code.
- **Direct Plug-in Technology™** – A patent-pending technology that allows for simple integration with third-party CPE solutions and technologies.
- **SmartInstall™ Workflow Engine** – A patent-pending solution architecture that enables easy customization and optimization of installation and support workflows.
- **Direct Registration™ Technology** – A patent-pending technology that enables our solutions to easily integrate with back office billing and OSS systems.

Key impacts of Fine Point's Solutions

Superior Subscriber Experience & Satisfaction

Every aspect of our solutions is designed to ensure that your brand and service are delivered in a positive, reinforcing manner that delivers superior subscriber experience and improves subscriber satisfaction.

Reduced Support Costs

Our solutions provide easily recognizable return-on-investment. By automating the support process, our solutions and technologies enable subscribers to self-repair without contacting the help desk thus reducing technical support and service administration costs.

Improved Time-to-Market of Services

Our patent-pending technologies empower you to get your products to market quickly and efficiently. Fine Point Technologies can provide fully localized, customized and integrated solutions in less than three months.

Faster and Easier Entry into New Markets

Our industry proven subscriber lifecycle management solutions build on our expertise in Internet service, subscriber experience and Internet technologies to help clients perform at the highest levels to deliver superior service for their subscribers and create

sustainable value for their shareholders. Using our industry knowledge, service-offering expertise and technology capabilities, we develop solutions to help clients around the world to enter new digital service markets.

A Partner You Can Trust

In order to ensure success in the future, your solution vendor must be there for you as your needs change. With over eight years of proven service and customer references, Fine Point Technologies is a partner you can trust and that will continue to be there with new and innovative solutions as your service evolves.

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