



CUSTOMER INTER@CTION *Solutions*®

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WebEx Support Center

WebEx Communications, Inc.

307 West Tasman Dr.
San Jose, CA 95134
Web site: www.webex.com
Price: Starter packs: two seats: \$300 per month, four seats: \$600 per month



representative (TSR) can view, diagnose and solve problems online from anywhere he or she has an IP connection. With this product, the TSR can access the customer's desktop and download patches or updates to the customer's computer. Windows, Linux, Solaris and Mac operating systems are all supported, and Support Center is available in English, German, French, Japanese, Korean, Swedish, Traditional Chinese and Simplified Chinese.

Once you are logged into Support System via a Web browser, you can either begin a support session or join an already created support session (see Figure 1). Once you either create or join an existing session, you can invite others using the "Send E-mail Invitation" button, as shown in Figure 2. Other participants then receive an e-mail with a link that takes the invited party directly to the support session with no need for a log-on procedure. Of course, if it is the participant's first WebEx session and he or she has not yet installed the WebEx software, the participant is prompted to install it. Once customers have joined, they show up in the Customer Information tab within the browser. You can then initiate a video or chat session with the participants.

One nice thing about Support Center is that it attains explicit permission for all of the actions you are taking on customers' machines, including actions of remote control, file transfer and recording. In addition, since customers are sometimes reluctant to give visibility or control of their entire computer, Support Center supports the limiting of view and control access to applications chosen by the customer. The desktop sharing also features annotation with your choice of colors per user for a collaborative experience, as shown in Figure 3.

The file transfer feature was pretty extensive. Using the file transfer feature,

No one can question the strength of WebEx in the Web meeting and collaboration space. Now WebEx is looking to

TMC™ Labs Review

extend its core capabilities beyond screen sharing by enabling support functions that can diagnose and repair PC problems. Providing high-quality support is not only a customer requirement, it also ensures customer loyalty and retention. With WebEx Support Center, a technical support

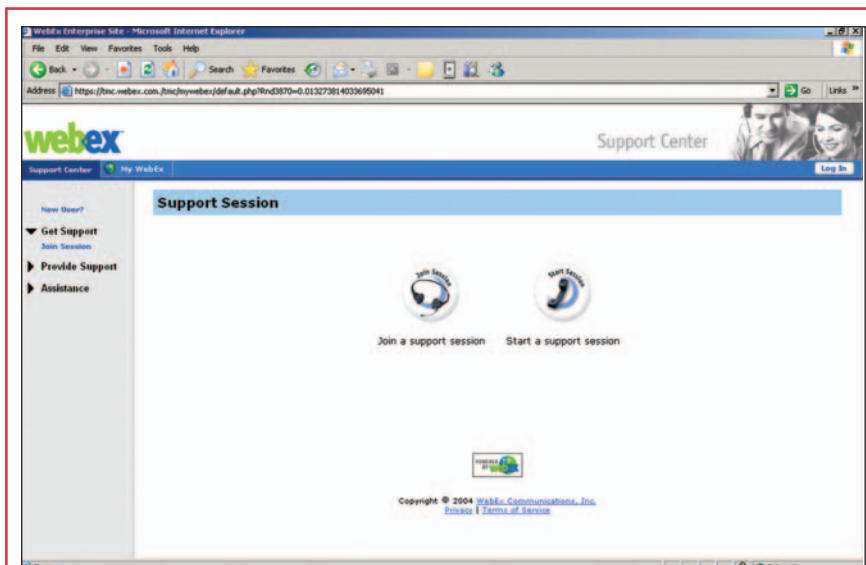


Figure 1. Web browser screen for starting or joining a session.

PROS	and	CONS
Good performance		Price is a bit steep
Video capabilities		No integrated VoIP support
Record sessions		
Multiple O/S support		
Reporting		

you can download applications, patches or updates to resolve issues. In addition to downloading files, you can upload log files from the customer's computer for later analysis. The file transfer feature also enables you to create, delete and rename folders and files.

There are some pretty nifty features in the product. The "Persistent Reboot" feature is one example. Because it is common to have to reboot the customer's computer after installing patches or applications, Support Center provides a way to reboot the customer's computer and then have the customer re-join the ongoing session automatically. Another nice feature is that if a TSR can't handle the customer's issue, he or she can actually escalate the call using the transfer or conference capabilities. Two-way video is supported so agents can see who they are speaking with; however, integrated VoIP is not supported. "Remote Printing" is an interesting feature that allows the TSR to redirect printouts from the customer's computer to a local computer for analysis. Finally, you can auto-record all sessions to create a full audio, data and video audit trail that can then be added to a knowledge base article. Another useful characteristic is the ability to record the session, including audio, for future playback. We recorded some sessions and then used the WebEx player to play back the session, and it performed flawlessly.

We should point out that WebEx Support Center works over standard http/https ports, so firewall traversal is not a concern. Additionally, data are transmitted using industry standard 128-bit SSL encryption over standard https ports. It also has extensive reporting and feedback capabilities that help users analyze their call center metrics, including handle time and customer satisfaction.

We also briefly examined SMARTtech, which uses the same core WebEx technolo-

gy, but it allows you to remotely control a computer without user intervention — assuming the software has been installed, of course. After SMARTtech is installed on all of your servers, PCs, etc., you can simply go to a Web browser and manage/remotely control them as though you were sitting at the machine. The Web interface is very good and allows you to organize your computers into folders, such as by location, by server type, or by whatever other organization structure you choose.

Conclusion

Overall, we were quite pleased with the feature-set and performance of WebEx's Support Center, as well as its very good "ease of use." However, its starter package of two seats for \$300/month seems a bit steep for smaller support centers looking to deploy this solution. Still, the ROI in many cases may make purchasing this product a no-brainer, so it is well worth examining.

RATINGS (0-5)
Installation: 5
Documentation: 5
Features: 4.75
GUI: 5
Overall: A-

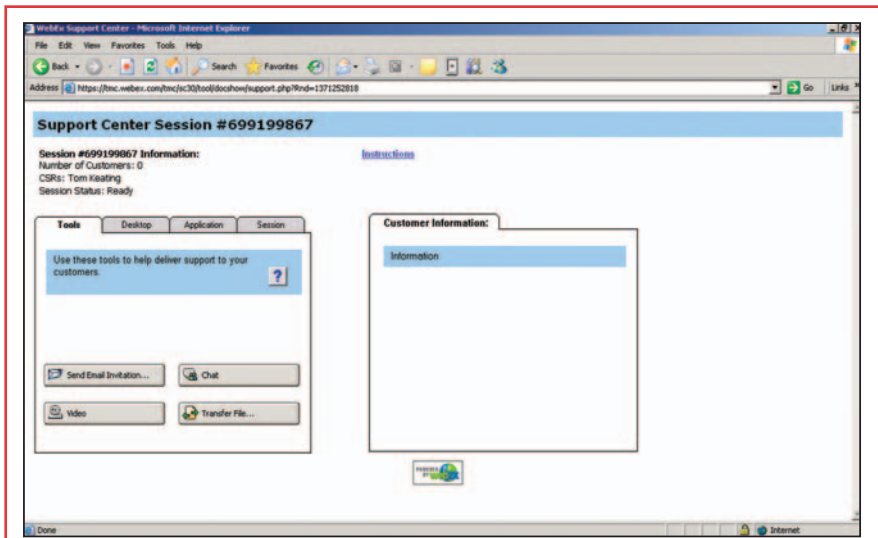


Figure 2. The ability to invite others and then start a video or chat session.



Figure 3. Screen sharing session with annotation markers highlighting the screen.