



Tacit Networks Goes the *Last Mile* to Change the WAFS Game

Analyst: Michael Fisch

Tacit Networks, a vendor of remote file access and consolidation technologies, recently announced two additions to its portfolio:

- **I^{shared} Mini** – a WAFS (wide area file services) appliance with a list price under \$4,000 and
- **Mobiliti** – a Windows desktop and laptop PCs solution for remote file access, synchronization, and backup.

With these products, Tacit has extended its reach to SOHO (small office, home office) and mobile worker segments. It has also changed the rules of the game in the WAFS market.

WAFS solutions generally have two components in a hub-and-spoke configuration – a central access server in the main data center and a remote access client or appliance in each branch office. The server and client communicate over a WAN link, providing remote users access to consolidated file storage. Compared to traditional distributed file storage, WAFS offers lower storage costs, easier management, and better data protection and recoverability.

Since the market price in general of WAFS clients is in the range of \$7,500 to \$10,000, they have been limited to mid-sized branches with approximately 10 or more users. It is more difficult to justify this expenditure for a smaller office. However, the new \$4,000 list price of the I^{shared} Mini makes it practical for SOHO implementations of 5 or fewer users.

Furthermore, Tacit recently acquired Mobiliti to complement its I^{shared} WAFS solutions. Mobiliti is a software solution for Windows PCs that offers file server access and backup to remote, mobile users. To minimize bandwidth when synchronizing, Mobiliti sends only compressed file differentials (or fine-grained changes). Its virtual networking feature provides offline access by caching recently-used files and directory metadata. It then synchronizes upon reconnection. Mobiliti is a going concern with 100,000 users already deployed.

These new products do more than round out Tacit's portfolio – they actually change the game in the WAFS market. Enterprises can now start looking for and expecting solutions for remote file access and consolidation that cover all remote workers, not just those in mid-sized branches. This means everyone down to small office workers, telecommuters, and road warriors. This approach makes sense in an age where workers are more and more geographically distributed. It should also spur demand in this relatively new but burgeoning market.

In short, with I^{shared} Mini and Mobiliti, Tacit just went the extra mile to cover the last mile in the WAFS approach to IT consolidation.



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About the Author

Michael Fisch is Director of Storage and Networking for The Clipper Group. He brings over ten years of experience in the computer industry working in sales, market analysis and positioning, and engineering. Mr. Fisch worked at EMC Corporation as a marketing program manager focused on service providers and as a competitive market analyst. Before that, he worked in international channel development, manufacturing, and technical support at Extended Systems, Inc. Mr. Fisch earned an MBA from Babson College and a Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Idaho.

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