



## IT Business Edge

Getting Out of the Image Business: Maybe VMs Aren't the Answer for the Desktop

August 1, 2007

<http://www.itbusinessedge.com/blogs/rob/?p=135>

Posted by Rob Enderle

It's not often I run into a product that has the potential to dramatically change the PC market, both by increasing PC sales and by greatly reducing the costs of managing lots of PCs.

[RingCube](#), the folks that make Mojopac, [yesterday released](#) an enterprise update addressing many of the shortcomings in their initial offering. I've been getting a lot of questions on this, so figured I would try to address why this looks like a game-changer to me and why even Google might get excited about it (though I do think it will be a hardware OEM that likely will pick up the company or product).

In short, think of this as 98 percent of the advantages of a VM desktop without the 20 percent to 40 percent performance penalty or having to buy two or more operating system licenses. Separating the Personal from the Generic.

Every PC has parts that are the same for virtually everyone, and each PC has parts unique to a particular user. The Mojopac separates those two parts. The applications, OS, and drivers stay with the hardware and the user settings and user data go on a USB drive (this could eventually be a nested drive that inserts into a universal bay in a PC or laptop similar to what HP has in its Media Center products).

I [mentioned](#) this technology in passing a few weeks ago, but it didn't seem right for the enterprise yet as it didn't have an acceptable level of security or management wrapped around it. I did see its potential though, and positioned it around the idea of employees being able to [buy their own laptop computers](#). However, with yesterday's changes, it seems Mojopac has addressed these shortcomings. This could eliminate much of the current image management activity.

### Resulting Policy

The result is that IT would simply create one software image for every employee containing the applications these employees are entitled to. That image would be maintained and updated on servers that would push them down to the users when updates were required. Users wouldn't need the external drive — just a partition on their laptops or desktops that would contain the generic image.

The image is encrypted and password-protected so that, should the device be stolen, the data would remain safe. This image would be entirely separate from what the OEM supplied with the hardware, allowing vendors to better maintain what they provide and eliminating forever the practice of reimaging hardware.

In many ways, this works like a virtual machine, but without the performance shortcomings. The result could even work with an Apple PC as long as it was running a generic Windows load to provide the operating system hooks the solution needs.

### Future Solution

The more I think about this, the more that having a removable drive with your stuff on it actually makes sense. You can then keep this encrypted data on your person so if your laptop is lost or stolen, you can recover almost immediately. You could download it, but downloading the applications and data from a remote backup server could take hours or days depending on the number of files. And time is often of the essence in this case.

In addition, laptops are generally stolen for their hardware but, encrypted or not, we have to report when sensitive data is stolen. If that data weren't physically with the laptop, you wouldn't have to report it. Granted, eventually, when bandwidth is fast enough, we could likely come up with something even safer, but for now, Mojopac resonates with me and represents one of three technologies from small companies that look very interesting right now.

### Wrapping Up

I think this company is likely to be snapped up by an OEM, Microsoft or even Google shortly (even VMware might want to pick this up as a competitive hedge), and I don't make product recommendations often. But this is potentially a game-changer and for many of you, it could reduce dramatically the costs surrounding managing your PCs. And there is nothing wrong with saving money.

