



"FNS is excited to work with Netformx to address the growing complexity of successfully deploying IP communications systems in the government sector. Netformx brings best of breed industry domain technologies, adding to FNS's arsenal of hardware, software and services solutions."

Doug Chesler
President
Federal Network Services, Inc.

FNS Introduces Effective Designs and Netformx Tool to Government Agencies

Executive Summary

About FNS

Federal Network Services, Inc. (FNS) is an integrator of IP communications technologies for Federal, state and local government agencies. FNS customers include the Dept. of Defense, the Dept. of Homeland Security, and other government and public sector agencies. The company has been serving all levels of government for more than a decade, with the objective of making government networks faster, smarter and more secure.

Challenge: No Design Procedures or Tools

Prior to Netformx, FNS relied on MS Visio and various CAD applications for designing networks. FNS found these applications cumbersome, and challenging to respond quickly and accurately to customer needs. The ability to respond to customers, as well as design accuracy suffered from the lack of process. FNS needed a tool that could help them manage the network design process, streamline tasks, and guarantee design accuracy. Moreover, FNS was looking for a solution to address the growing government needs to design and deploy large secure networks.

Solution: New FNS Design Process based on DesignXpert

FNS adopted a new network design process based on Netformx DesignXpert. All of the tool's features, including network design, configuration, validation, and exportation into html and Excel were incorporated into FNS design procedures. These capabilities enabled FNS to design networks faster, respond to customers more effectively, and ensure accuracy with automatically validated designs. After successfully utilizing DesignXpert with several projects, FNS entered into a reseller agreement with Netformx. FNS brings both DesignXpert and accumulated usage expertise to new government opportunities.

"FNS is excited to work with Netformx to address the growing complexity of successfully deploying IP communications systems in the government sector. Netformx brings best of breed industry domain technologies, adding to FNS's arsenal of hardware, software and services solutions."

Doug Chesler
President, Federal Network Services, Inc.

"I selected DesignXpert because it has network drawing capabilities, validation and creation of bill of materials all rolled into one tool. In addition, I like the components library, and the ability to export to Excel and html — I like everything about DesignXpert."

Ankita Singh
Pre-Sales Engineer, Federal Network Services, Inc.



“DesignXpert drives our design process from the beginning of the project. Based on my interaction with the customer, I can find out what they need and start designing a network right away in DesignXpert.”

Lack of Procedures Impacts Sales Efforts

“We primarily used Microsoft Visio,” said Ankita Singh, the new FNS Pre-Sales Engineer, when asked about the company’s design process prior to her arrival. “FNS had lacked sufficient procedure before Netformx, and limited design process management tools. Sometimes we would use a generic drawing tool. But we had insufficient tools or procedures to help us manage projects.”

“Since we had insufficient network design tools, there were real limitations to validate a design,” she added. “The engineer would just have to know what they were doing. Bills of materials had to be created manually, and that was often the extent of the documentation. Most of the time we were limited to a diagram of the network.”

The absence of design management would cause problems downstream throughout the sales process and even into network installation. Since there was no process or tools to develop and validate the design, engineers would be left without resources when they would go on site to complete a customer installation.

FNS Solidifies Design Process with Netformx

FNS needed to change their entire design and sales process. First the company established a pre-sales engineer position to develop preliminary network designs, and basically manage the entire design process before the contract is signed. Second, FNS adopted DesignXpert from Netformx as their standard design tool. Now the design process for larger network projects is based on DesignXpert, and all functions are performed within the Netformx tool, from discovery and initial product design down to the bill of materials generation.

“DesignXpert drives our design process from the beginning of the project,” Singh explained. “Based on my interaction with the customer, I can find out what they need and start designing a network right away in DesignXpert. Then I can produce an easy to understand network diagram, so the customer can visualize how the network fits into their existing environment. If they need changes, I can easily modify the design and all related documents simultaneously.”

Singh notes that DesignXpert plays a pivotal role in every step of the process, even when she hands the project back to the sales department. “The feature that enables DesignXpert to generate a bill of materials and export to Excel is a significant advantage,” Singh said. “I can just convert the design to a BOM and send it off to the salespeople.”



"If I had to go on-site without Netformx, it would take me at least a couple of days to understand the customer's network and their needs, and then develop a design based on that knowledge. Now, with Netformx, that same design can be completed in a couple of hours."

DesignXpert Optimizes FNS Design Resources

"When designing a network for a customer, our top objectives are to develop the design quickly and to do it accurately," said Ankita. "DesignXpert helps us achieve both of those goals."

"Before Netformx, our engineers would depend on a Bill of Materials list to guide them when installing the network at a customer site," she continued. "If I had to go on-site without Netformx, it would take me at least a couple of days to understand the customer's network and their needs, and then develop a design based on that knowledge. Now, with Netformx, that same design can be completed in a couple of hours."

DesignXpert helps save time on the installation side as well, because the designs are already completed when the engineer arrives at the customer site. So the engineer does not have to start all over again with a parts list. They can access an interactive html design diagram online containing the IP addresses and all the resources they need to effectively, quickly and accurately implement the network. The dynamic design diagram can even be modified by the engineer to adapt to customer requirements brought about during the installation.

DesignXpert provides the following advantages for FNS:

- **Design Process Efficiency:** By including all the design steps in one tool, Netformx saves time for FNS and helps the company build a more efficient process. DesignXpert features such as design templates enable FNS to leverage work on previous networks, and save valuable design time.

"I have templates in DesignXpert that I use for VoIP, security and wireless," Singh said. "So I can get a jump start on a project by using a template, and modify it according to my customer's needs. I wouldn't be able to do that without Netformx. There is no resource we had before that even comes close."

- **Up-to-Date Product Knowledge:** Singh noted that Netformx's up-to-date and extensive library of network components is a highly reliable resource for network knowledge. "I have not come across any device in any design I have created that was not in the Netformx library," she confirmed.
- **Guaranteed Design Accuracy:** One important advantage FNS gains from DesignXpert is that the designs are already validated before the engineer shows up at the customer site. DesignXpert provides FNS with design validation at the push of a button. Even though an engineer may have the expertise to configure a valid design, there are cases where they may not be familiar with one particular product or device. While this unknown device can introduce uncertainty into the configuration, DesignXpert validation removes any doubt and guarantees that the design will work.



"By saving engineering time, DesignXpert enables us to be more profitable on the projects that provide the most revenue — the larger network designs."



275 Saratoga Ave., Suite 200
Santa Clara, CA 95050
Tel: 408.423.6600
Fax: 408.423.6699

www.netformx.com

© 2005 Netformx, Ltd. All rights reserved. Netformx and DesignXpert are registered trademarks of Netformx, Ltd. All other names mentioned are used for identification purposes only and may be trademarks of their respective companies. 01/05

"If I am working with a new type of component that I am not familiar with, then I depend on DesignXpert validation to make sure I am correctly configuring the device," Singh said. "If I ever have any doubt about a design, then I can rely on Netformx for validation and it provides me with 100% confidence in the design."

- **Excellent Design Representations:** "Sometimes FNS customers are not network savvy, and they just want to see a diagram of the network that they can understand," Singh explained. "DesignXpert enables us to produce an easy to understand network drawing, and export it to a format our customer can access, like html."

The Bottom Line: Netformx Fortifies FNS Profitability

"Most of our profit is made on engineering a project," Singh said. "By saving engineering time, DesignXpert enables us to be more profitable on the projects that provide the most revenue — the larger network designs."

DesignXpert also allows FNS to make more cost-effective designs for customers, and this contributes to their competitiveness in the government services market where jobs are bid on regularly, and the bottom line is always about cost.

But in addition to saving time and money, DesignXpert empowers FNS to build networks more effectively because they have the necessary procedures in place. "DesignXpert gives us an edge over the competition, because we have a proven formula to come up with effective solutions for our customers," Singh concluded. "Netformx has helped us establish a design process and become more project-oriented, so we can focus on meeting customer needs, instead of showing up at the customer site with a parts list, and reacting to problems along the way."

FNS resells DesignXpert to Government Agencies

As the need for a tool like DesignXpert is growing within the government community, FNS is well-positioned to introduce the solution and support its customer base. FNS has been using DesignXpert internally for different projects, thus the value it brings to the market is well beyond just reselling.