



WHITE PAPER

Accessing ERP Systems from Any Device, Anywhere

Utilizing HTML5 Technology to Enable
Browser-Based Access to Enterprise
Resource Planning (ERP) Systems

Ericom Software
www.ericom.com
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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Remote Access & BYOD Challenges	3
Getting the Most out of ERP Systems	4
Cloud-Based ERP	4
HTML5 Browser-Based Access – The Right Choice	5
Use Case – Ericom AccessNow for SAP and other ERP Systems	6
Case Study – North Greenville University Delivers Browser-Based Access to ERP Modules	8
More About AccessNow	9
About Ericom.....	10

Introduction

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) software is all about making business processes more efficient and more seamless. Interestingly, the same is also true of enterprise mobility.

With an increasing number of staff travelling and requiring off-premise interaction with the organization's ERP system, the ability to provide remote access to ERP systems is becoming increasingly important to maintain or increase productivity and worker efficiency. For example, healthcare professionals may need to access an ERP system for data collection at the point of care, while field service reps may need to receive updated work orders and enter their billable hours while on the go.

Compounding these challenges, the growing trends of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and Consumerization of IT are changing how and where people work. These initiatives require organizations to rethink how they deliver and manage IT resources, including their ERP infrastructure. As advances in connectivity technology eliminate physical boundaries and mobile devices become more powerful, mobility is creating new opportunities as well as new challenges for today's enterprises. Empowering users with remote access to ERP via tablets and smartphones can help organizations get more out of their IT investment in enterprise systems.

In light of these trends, organizations need to find ways to extend the reach of ERP systems to users "anywhere, anytime, and across any device," by allowing them to access business-critical applications through industry standard Web browsers without compromising security and IT control. One of the enablers to realizing the benefits and opportunities of mobile, remote access while meeting the challenges head on is by utilizing HTML5 technology.

Remote Access & BYOD Challenges

When choosing ERP delivery solutions that accommodate remote access and BYOD initiatives, organizations need to strike a balance between meeting the needs of end-users and avoiding overtaxing their IT department and budget. When it comes to ERP systems, the multitude of requirements can often be in conflict with each other. For instance, providing employees with remote access over the Internet can offer flexibility and productivity gains, but may also introduce security concerns that do not apply to users operating exclusively within the organization's firewall.

Enabling employees to work with a wide variety of endpoint devices, both in and outside of the workplace, presents a number of challenges for IT departments:

- **Security** – Personal devices that are connected to networks create vulnerabilities and are more difficult to secure than devices that operate exclusively within the firewall. Moreover, IT staff must be able to ensure the security and integrity of business-critical data, even if the endpoint device is lost or stolen.
- **Compliance** – For organizations that must meet federal or other regulations or standards, such as HIPAA for healthcare organizations, compliance can be a challenge in the face of a variety of device types operating inside and outside of the firewall.

- **Management** – Managing a variety of personal devices and native clients, instead of a standard-issue device that comes preloaded with the necessary software can quickly turn into an IT and Helpdesk nightmare. Such devices must be provisioned with the relevant software, while IT must support and administer organization-wide software updates across all endpoint devices.
- **No Native Clients Allowed!** – To reduce costs, some organizations have embraced budget-friendly, stripped-down versions of laptops such as Google Chromebooks and thin or zero-client laptops. The challenge of these devices is that connecting to resources such as remote or virtual desktops or applications requires native clients, which Chromebooks, for example, cannot support.
- **BYOD Overhead** – Time is money. The time IT personnel spend provisioning, supporting, updating, ensuring compliance, managing and securing numerous and diverse personal devices represents a significant cost to an organization.

Getting the Most out of ERP Systems

To maximize productivity when working with an ERP system, employees require the following:

- Seamless access to the full ERP system, including all dashboards, customizations and third party add-ins
- Ability to work with almost any device, including Windows PCs, Macs, Linux, iPads / iPhones, Android devices, Google Chromebooks, etc.
- Fast, smooth performance anytime and anywhere; even over a slow, low-bandwidth connection
- Access to local resources such as the client device file system, clipboard and printer

Cloud-Based ERP

One increasingly popular approach to solving the challenges of ERP access in the mobile age is to provide access to cloud-based ERP systems via the Internet. Cloud-based ERP systems are generally hosted by a managed service provider on external servers, eliminating the need for the organization's internal IT department to maintain the software on-premise.

According to a recent Gartner survey analysis¹, "Adoption of Cloud ERP, 2013 Through 2023," organizations are considering cloud-based ERP as a potential replacement for aging core systems that are out of support or running on old technology platforms. Below are a few key findings in the survey which indicate an interest in the cloud. However, the adoption to date has been slow and the timeline to implement not a near-term priority:

- Including the 2% that already have core ERP in the cloud, a total of 47% of organizations surveyed plan to move core ERP systems to the cloud within five years.

¹ Gartner, "Adoption of Cloud ERP, 2013 Through 2023," January 24, 2014, as cited in Forbes.com

- 30% of organizations surveyed indicated they planned to keep the majority of their ERP systems on-premise for the foreseeable future.

Since not all ERP systems can be truly web-enabled, managed service providers are frequently forced to rely on remote access solutions to provide access to the cloud-hosted ERP software. This approach often uses Remote Desktop Client technology to ensure a secure connection. Many remote access solutions also require installing client software on end-user devices, creating more work for IT departments. Moreover, these clients are usually device or platform-specific, adding to the complexity and overhead.

So while cloud-based ERP can be part of the answer, it's not a complete solution.



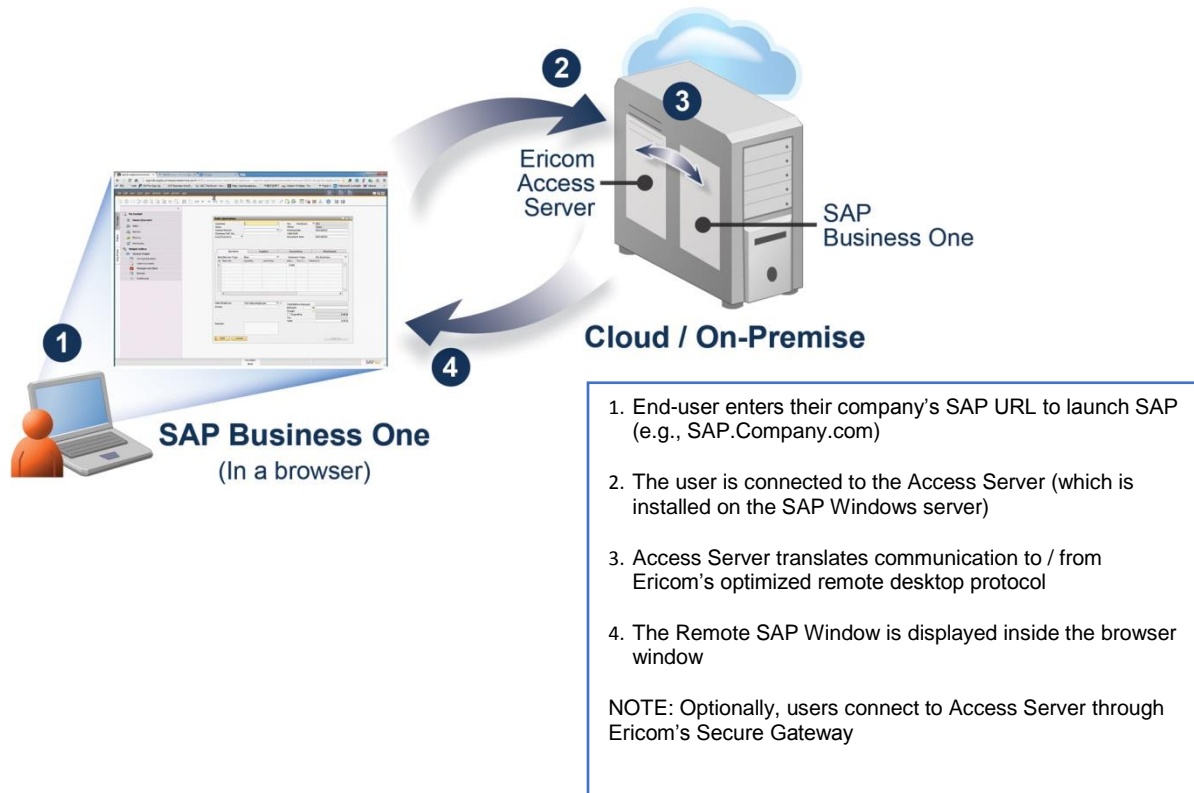
HTML5 Browser-Based Access – The Right Choice

A browser-based access approach that utilizes HTML5 technology is as an ideal complement to on-premise or cloud-ERP as it provides access to ERP entirely from within the browser. There is nothing to install on the endpoint device — significantly reducing IT overhead. In fact, HTML5 access addresses all of the above-mentioned challenges:

- No downloads required. As mentioned before, client software must typically be installed on desktops, laptops and mobile devices to facilitate access to centrally hosted desktops and applications. With HTML5, organizations can achieve pure browser-based access to these resources. All they need is a device with an HTML5-compliant browser.
- Simplified deployment. All software requires periodic updates. When software is installed as a native client, each and every endpoint device in the organization must be updated. In sharp contrast, HTML5 browser-based access only requires embedding browser-based software into corporate portals by adding a link or a frame – easy – this means no client device software update is necessary.
- Simplified integration with SSL VPNs. SSL VPNs—secure virtual private networks based on the Secure Sockets Layer protocol—can be used with both native clients and browser-based solutions. With an HTML5 browser based solution, access to centrally hosted tools is easy and automatic, whereas opening up communication channels to native clients on many devices can be quite an undertaking, requiring significant support.
- Device-agnostic. HTML5 is already supported by virtually all browsers, such as Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox, and Safari. As such, enabling access from anywhere and on any device is effortless.
- IT department relief. HTML5 solutions reduce hardware and mobile costs by leveraging both employee-owned devices and IT technologies that are designed to lower IT support and overhead.
- Helpdesk friendly. A browser-based solution fits all devices, significantly reducing support issues and simplifying configurations.
- Security. Since no information is stored on the endpoint device, data is never compromised if the device is lost or stolen.

Use Case – Ericom AccessNow for SAP and other ERP Systems

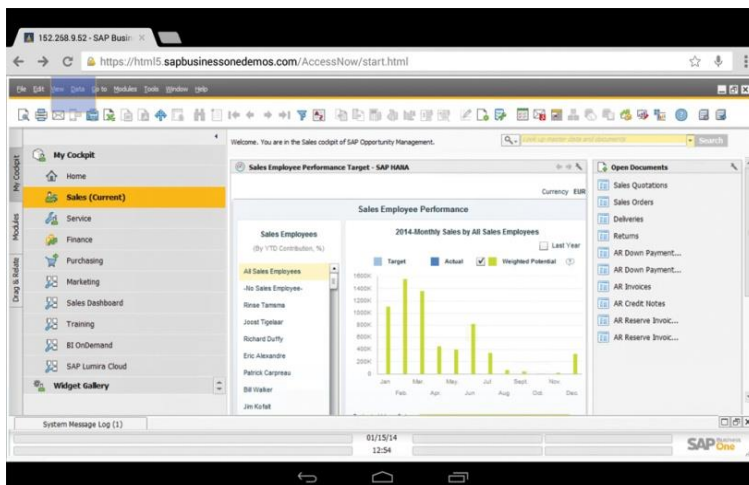
Ericom AccessNow™ offers a high-performance HTML5 technology that runs inside a browser, making access to ERP systems universally simple, yet secure. With AccessNow, small and midsize businesses can provide access to SAP ERP (R/3), SAP Business One and other leading ERPs — quickly and easily, from anywhere, utilizing all types of devices that support an HTML5 browser. This capability creates new opportunities for users to interface, for example, with various SAP modules from remote locations. Application data is updated in real time; providing instant access to information, while SSL-secured technology ensures that transactions are never compromised.



The following benefits of AccessNow for SAP Business One exemplify why secure, browser-based solutions have become so important in the workplace:

- Zero client install. One of the main benefits of AccessNow is that it is easy and inexpensive to maintain. It works through the browser on most devices. No client installation, configuration, management, updating, patching, etc. is required, significantly reducing IT overhead. Licensed users can open up any browser and have full access to their ERP applications, simply by clicking the company's AccessNow URL.

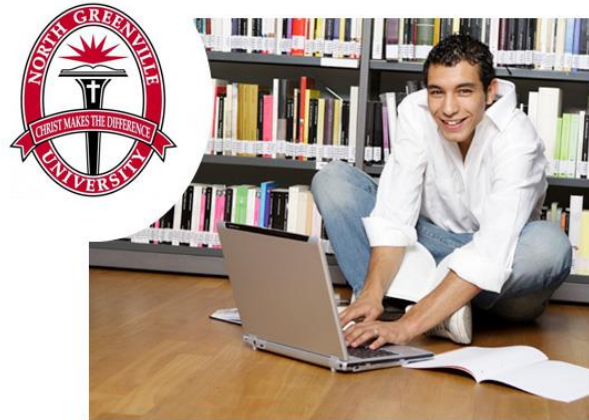
- Simple logins. Upon entering their log-in credentials, SAP Business One appears directly inside the browser window, with all the functionality that's normally available in the user's SAP Business One system. For instance, a field sales representative working at the site of one of their customers can create an on-the-spot quotation.
- No learning curve. With AccessNow, there is no need to rebuild any of the functionality in the SAP Business One application; instead, the exact functionality that is activated by each user's license and security rights is readily available for them inside the browser. Moreover, all of the user's third-party add-ins, customizations and dashboards are completely and transparently available.
- Great user experience. Another benefit of working with SAP Business One using AccessNow is that the user interface is incredibly fast, thanks to the compression and acceleration technology built in to Ericom's solution consistently delivering superior remote access performance. Thus, whether employees are using an on-premise client or a Cloud-based on-demand application via a browser, they can work smoothly and efficiently with SAP Business One from any device, anywhere.
- Extends the reach of SAP Business One. Facilitating browser-based access, AccessNow expands the number of device types that are compatible with SAP Business One, enabling employees to leverage desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones. For instance, Google Chromebooks have become very popular thanks to their low cost, but these devices are not capable of running standard Windows programs. AccessNow allows Chromebooks, Android devices, iPhones and iPads, as well as Mac OS X and Linux devices, to access and run SAP Business One and other centrally hosted Windows applications without complex (and expensive) integration – simply through the use of an ordinary browser. It also makes it easy to adhere to IT policies.



AccessNow puts SAP B1 (or any other ERP system) on your tablet

Case Study – North Greenville University Delivers Browser-Based Access to ERP Modules

Situated in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, North Greenville University (NGU) comprised of three campuses, 2,500 students and 500 administrative, faculty and staff. Each user community requires access to a mix of applications including various modules of an ERP solution specifically designed for higher education institutions.



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NGU selected Ericom’s HTML5 access technology to provide students, faculty and staff with browser-based access to hosted Windows applications. NGU is utilizing Ericom’s solutions to drive key initiatives at the university such as BYOD and distance education which require easy access to a broad range of applications from all types of devices.

“Through standard browsers, NGU can deliver all of the features and functionality of our SPSS and ERP systems, giving users the flexibility to remotely access information and files securely from across an array of endpoint devices,” explained Tim Patterson, Network Services Manager at North Greenville University. “Ericom offered a brilliant solution that addressed our BYOD security concerns.”

Key Benefits of Ericom's Browser-Based Access Solution

- Enables students, faculty and staff to securely access ERP system modules via standard browsers
- Zero endpoint installation eliminates the need to configure and manage client software on endpoint devices, significantly reducing IT and Helpdesk support workload
- Takes advantage of existing ERP infrastructure and requires no coding and ongoing maintenance
- Extends the life of the ERP system by allowing remote access across an array of devices

More About AccessNow

RDP is a technology that has historically relied on client-side software to function properly. AccessNow lets users harness the power and security of RDP in the browser, without these complicated software components. This technology enables organizations to enjoy the following benefits:

- AccessNow provides access to Windows desktops and applications such as SAP ERP (R/3), SAP Business One and other ERP systems (cloud or on-premises).
- BYOD Enabler — supports access from any HTML5 compatible browser on any end-user device, including Windows, Mac, Linux, iPad / iPhone, Android, Chromebook, etc.
- Comes with Ericom SSL Secure Gateway; provides secure, encrypted access when connecting from outside the firewall - <http://www.ericom.com/SecureGateway>. AccessNow also works smoothly with existing SSL VPNs, such as those from Juniper, Cisco and more.
- Integrates network compression and acceleration technology, delivering superior remote access performance even under low-bandwidth conditions.
- Provides access to local resources such as the client device file system, printers and clipboard.
- Enables users to work with their ERP system and other published Windows or web applications, simultaneously.

Today's work mobility challenges, BYOD trend, and staff requirements for remote access to ERP systems have grown. It is more crucial than ever to provide access to business resources, for workforce productivity and efficiency improvement. Organizations must rethink how they deliver and manage IT resources, including their ERP infrastructure. They must find ways to extend the reach of ERP systems to users "anywhere, anytime, and across any device," while helping organizations get more out of their IT investment in enterprise systems. This can be achieved by capitalizing on HTML5 technology with products such as AccessNow, allowing workers to access business-critical resources through industry standard Web browsers without compromising security and IT control.

AccessNow – see for yourself:

http://www.ericom.com/demo_AccessNow_ERP?URL_ID=1992

Ericom is very interested in receiving your feedback to this paper, and knowing what other white paper topics would be useful to you. Please write to WhitePapers@ericom.com

About Ericom

Ericom Software is a leading global provider of Application Access, Virtualization and RDP Acceleration Solutions. Since 1993, Ericom has been helping users access enterprise mission-critical applications running on a broad range of Microsoft Windows Terminal Servers, Virtual Desktops, legacy hosts and other systems. Ericom has offices in the United States, United Kingdom and EMEA. Ericom also has an extensive network of distributors and partners throughout North America, Europe, Asia and the Far East. Our expanding customer base is more than 30 thousand strong, with over 7 million users. For more information about Ericom and its products, please visit <http://www.ericom.com>.

For more information on Ericom's products and services, contact us at the location nearest to you. And visit our web site: <http://www.ericom.com>

North America

Ericom Software Inc.
231 Herbert Avenue, Bldg. #4
Closter, NJ 07624 USA
Tel +1 (201) 767 2210
Fax +1 (201) 767 2205
Toll-free 1 (888) 769 7876
Email info@ericom.com

UK & Western Europe

Ericom Software (UK) Ltd.
11a Victoria Square
Droitwich, Worcestershire
WR9 8DE United Kingdom
Tel +44 (0) 845 644 3597
Fax +44 (0) 845 644 3598
Email info@ericom.co.uk

International

Ericom Software Ltd.
8 Hamarpeh Street
Har Hotzvim Technology Park
Jerusalem 91450 Israel
Tel +972 (2) 591 1700
Fax +972 (2) 571 4737
Email info@ericom.com

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