Overview and Benefits

Skire provides a complete set of application hosting services including all equipment, hardware, 3rd party software, facilities and services necessary to host and maintain the applications such that customers can access and use the Application via an Internet browser meeting Skire's then-current specifications. The benefits of a Skire-hosted deployment include lower initial and ongoing costs, a dedicated staff of resources focused solely on maintaining Skire's applications, and an extensive hosting and security infrastructure.

Rapid Deployment

Because the infrastructure to support the applications is already in place, customers can have immediate access without waiting for the procurement, configuration and installation of any hardware or software.

Security & Reliability

Skire provides a comprehensive infrastructure in support of the Skire-hosted applications to ensure the highest levels of performance, reliability and security.

Dedicated Resources & Expertise

The Skire Network Operations Group is focused entirely on deploying and maintaining Skire's applications, and continuously monitors our systems and applications.

Automatic Software Upgrades

As a Skire-hosted solution, customers have immediate access to the latest product upgrades without undergoing any installation effort.

Lower Total Cost of Ownership

As a Skire-hosted solution, the cost associated with purchasing servers and 3rd party software is eliminated, as the only infrastructure requirement is Internet Explorer®. In addition, there are other significant reductions in customer's total cost of ownership by eliminating the soft costs associated with allocating resources to install up and maintain the system.

Infrastructure & Security

Skire provides a comprehensive security infrastructure that includes formal security policies, a dedicated team of security personnel, and partnerships with industry leading technology providers to ensure the highest levels of system and data reliability. Protection is provided through a combination of physical security, network security, and security measures within the applications themselves. Skire's security policies include data encryption, anti-virus process, security audits, database credentials coding, DMZ, password protection, risk assessment, and server security. Skire's security personnel have clearly defined roles and responsibilities to ensure that security goals are met. Among the features of Skire's security infrastructure are production server hosting at SAVVIS, a real-time intrusion detection system, daily data tape backups, firewall protection, role-based access control within the application, stringent authentication processes, and a disaster recovery plan.

Data Center

Skire's application and data servers are hosted at a SAVVIS Internet Data Center (IDC), which is used by companies with large-scale and secure hosting requirements such as Merrill Lynch, Yahoo and American Airlines. The IDC is a custom-designed facility with raised floors, HVAC temperature control systems with separate cooling zones, and seismically braced racks. The IDC has physical security systems such as,

advanced smoke detection and suppression systems, 24/7 secured access with motion sensors, video camera surveillance, and security breach alarms. The IDC features a redundant network of multiple fiber trunks from multiple sources, redundant power on the premises, and multiple backup generators. The network of IDC's operates throughout the world in major metropolitan areas, with close proximity to major and private interconnects.

Intrusion Detection

Skire deploys a host-based, real-time intrusion monitoring system that detects unauthorized activity and security breaches and responds automatically. If the system detects a threat, it sends automatic notifications or takes other countermeasures according to pre-established security policies in order to prevent information loss or theft. The system enables the development of precautionary security policies that prevent expert hackers or authorized users with malicious intent from misusing systems, applications, and data. Skire's intrusion detection system also provides complete control over systems with policy-based management that determines which systems and activities to monitor and what actions to take, as well as with real-time intrusion detection reports for both host and network components.

Firewall and Data Encryption

Skire uses Watchguard's Firebox X technology which provides comprehensive protection with security proxies and dynamic packet filtering, along with branch office and remote user VPN support. The LiveSecurity features allow the system to maintain constant updates of the software to prevent new potential threats. Only HTTP port 80, HTTPS port 443, and external monitoring ports are open; all other ports are closed to access. Incoming and outgoing e-mail is scanned using the Norton Antivirus Corporate Edition for Microsoft Exchange after passing through scanning by the Watchguard Firebox. Secure Socket Layer (SSL) is implemented in Unifier for transport layer security.

Data Tape Backups

Backup images of system data are made throughout the day that can be restored within minutes. In addition, daily tape backups are made of all data and critical application systems using Veritas Backup Exec software and a Sony AIT-3 backup tape drive. Tapes are picked up and stored off-site in a secure, third-party facility.

Online Digital Vault Backup

Skire utilizes an online backup and recovery solution that automates data protection through a comprehensive "hands-free" process via a web-based interface. The service provides Continuous Data Protection (CDP) of customer data offsite and makes it immediately retrievable via snapshots every 15 minutes.