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Visca Online Product Review DigiChat PRO-100 Server

Webmasters are always looking for ways to enhance their site interactivity and "stickiness", and one of the all time best ways of doing this is through setting up a chat room. Chat allows users to create a sense of community on your site, thus giving them value to returning to your site on a regular basis to catch up with fellow community members.

Selection of appropriate server software for this has been greatly simplified by the release of DigiChat from Digi-Net Software. This well priced, all in one, feature rich chat server solution will get your site talking within an hour of starting the install process! Great! But what will really draw your attention (and not to mention your users attention) is the slick chat interface your users will get to use.

Graphically the attention to detail was well above the norm for this type of application (see screenshot), and the ability for users to individually customize the environment was excellent too. Want hot red text, bold and in Times New Roman font? No problem!

Using pure java, this multiplatform server (and we DO mean multiplatform, Windows9x/NT, Linux/UNIX, Solaris, FreeBSD, BeOS, Mac and more) installs effortlessly and creates two separate components on the NT box we tested DigiChat on. The server NT service and ChatMaster component. The server service runs in the background providing chat functionality, while the ChatMaster (which is also installable on a remote workstation) allows complete control over the chat environment.

Another bonus about this software both on the server and workstation side is its frugal use of system resources, all while being highly stable and responsive. The number of concurrent user connections the server can handle depends on two factors, one being your licensed number of users and second, the amount of horsepower under the hood of your server - the software adapts to conditions automatically.

As an administrator, implementing the chat functionality into your web pages is a snap. Templates are provided to make it a painless process and is only a few lines of Java code to paste into the desired pages. For users, getting into the chat room is just as easy, just enter your user name and off you go to start chatting.

What's great is that the features don't stop there, it also has the ability to log chatting; users can create buddy lists; flood control; automated censoring; moderated chat (excluded from base edition); webmasters can place their own rotating ad banners for revenue generation; private instant messaging between users; and the great DigiPosts feature that lets you write messages which can be displayed in the chat room text area on a time interval you specify.

After all this, the pricing is a bargain and the publisher often has discounts getting you more concurrent connections on your license for the same price! A base installation with 100 users is only \$595US, almost half the price of the closest competitor, and that competitor isn't feature rich like DigiChat. Purchasing the product through their phone number or online was quick and painless, customer support was easy to use, helpful and informative.

Also available, if your web site is hosted in a shared environment and you have limited access to the server, Digi-Net offers chat hosting solutions for a low monthly fee. This is a great way of leaving it to someone else to look after all the software licensing, updating, technical support and hardware involved.

Overall DigiChat stood above the crowd of mediocre chat server offerings out there, slashed the price and wrapped it all up in something that is easy to install for administrators and easy to use for users.