***Globalization***

Outsourcing is the business dynamic to utilize labor pools outside of the core organization (located in other countries, where the cost of labor and overhead are reduced immensely). Though the practice of “outside sourcing” has been understood and implemented since the mid 1900’s (slowly and steadily increasing) in the United States, there was a major shift around the 1990’s to utilize the global markets (employment and commodities) to save significant money on labor, operational costs, possible construction of facilities/building(s) and taxes as well as the ability to skirt the fringes of regulations and/or taxes. This system has become quite effective in many business models (single department of an organization or even a whole sector) and industries. Though a controversial alternative to insourcing (because it increases domestic unemployment), it has become extremely popular because of the many benefits; profitability, efficiency, workers willing to do the specific job, access to other resources and/or skills as well as help the local economy in the designated countries. There are many advantages, yet, there are also several potential risks; lack of oversight/control, extensive turnaround times (due to the probability of translation issues, network/platform dilemmas (lack of training/knowledge, technical misconceptions, and/or malfunctioning system), inadvertent inadequate cultural understanding and/or time zone variances) and the possibility of intellectual property theft. Outsourcing jobs distantly (sent overseas) is known as offshoring, which creates more operational logistics than nearshoring (a bordering country or not-so-distant region) jobs.

Furthermore, onshore outsourcing (also known as rural sourcing) jobs within the United States has begun to be a more favorable construct for a plethora of specific job types for many reasons; creates jobs domestically, eased manageability for oversight, intellectual property protections, network security as well as ethically positive (because it boosts local economies and the national statistics). Rural outsourcing has fundamentally been established and reinforced nationally by the technological advancements over the past decade. Technologies, computers, networks/internet and databases have made onshoring a positive business finance ROA (Return of Investment) possibility, because there is so much information that can be obtained online, effortlessly. The national, regional and local demographics can be analyzed through matrices of studies to conclude most prudent investment, while still being moral and patriotic. Multi-billion-dollar conglomerates can afford to pursue onshore outsourcing, which will integrate taxes and/or commerce into impoverished municipalities throughout the country. This trend will have an immense impact on stabilizing economically distressed areas across the nation.

***Appropriate Use of Technology***

The system I designed is ideal for the business model of Equinox Distributors for several key factors. I chose hardware that is fairly powerful and reliable, yet economical. All of the cost of the system is invested in the hardware and equipment. The server platform and all of the software are free, open-source licenses. The hardware (2 hp touchscreen laptops, 4 RAID Enclosures, 2 2.5”internal SATA SSD, 2 wi-fi routers and the Brother all-in-one printer) can all be repurposed (business and / or personal). One stipulation that was initially specified by Scott Colegrove was that the physical system is to be “lightweight and portable”.

The RAID drives can be configured easily from the 512GB up to 2TB, so increasing storage can be accomplished with little effort and/or no experience. The Help Desk Solutions Manual I created has references to dozens of resources, support and troubleshooting sites / pages as well as myriad links to tutorials for installation, initialization, configuration settings, etc.

Utilizing the cloud for website hosting and data storage as well and other services may have benefits for many businesses, though, Equinox Distributors is a small business with little growth. Paying corporations for subscriptions and membership fees regularly, on schedule, is a waste of money for this business model, because as I had previously noted all the benefits of investing solely in the hardware (and labor costs [in next week’s invoice – Asg 6) and the ability for cheap, easy scalability, which will satisfy the business capabilities for a long time.

***Digital Literacy***

Digital literacy can fall into several broad categories and levels, though generally refers to the ability to understand and navigate through technological devices, platforms and systems as well as adapt to new ones fairly seamlessly. It encompasses the fundamentals of English composition as well as the skills to write basic coding and / or accumulated extensive knowledge/experience with software and other platforms. Some people may consider themselves digitally literate by being able to send an email or post a picture on Facebook, though, that can be true on the lowest level, but, instant problem solving methods and troubleshooting is a large part of digital literacy and also the best ways to truly learn and gather experience about technological problems that may arise.