Online Remote Customer Support

Technical Note

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Introduction

Various techniques and applications have been deployed in the past two decades to provide remote customer support for analytical laboratory instrument and data systems. Beginning with modem access (at 300 baud!) to enable terminal command line entry and data file transfer, Agilent has always lead the industry in deployment of remote support systems, understanding that this capability is crucial to the success of our customers. With the advent of Windows-based remote access applications, a PC instrument controller with the appropriate software in a customer laboratory could be operated by Agilent support personnel in a distant office. The Internet has enabled the next-generation of remote support, greatly simplifying access and offering powerful tools for instrument control, diagnostics, training, and repair—while providing a secure environment controlled by the customer. This technical note describes the benefits of Agilent online remote customer e-support, with a detailed example to demonstrate how easily and quickly the system can be accessed and operated.

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Benefits of Agilent Online Remote Support

The effectiveness of support for instruments and applications is critical in the success of a commerical or research laboratory. In today's fast-paced environment, chemists need real-time:

- Answers to questions

- Training

- Operation assistance and instruction

- Application assistance

- Results analysis

- Instrument diagnosis, troubleshooting

- Instrument repair and maintenance recommendations

- File transfer (data, methods, macros, logs, etc.)

- Download of software patches

Access to timely and cost-effective expert advice, support, and consulting can be essential to meet deadlines and deliverables. With Agilent's secure web-based remote support, a chemist can easily share with a support engineer exactly what the chemist sees on his or her data system, in real-time. Trial solutions can be implemented and results examined immediately. Expert Agilent consulting can be requested if needed; Agilent consultants can also view the system in real-time. Corrective action can be taken without the time and expense of a visit, and on-site efforts can be more effective when problems are understood clearly, corrective action planned, and parts ordered before the visit. Online meetings can be scheduled with one or many attendees, and they can be spontaneous as the need arises. Agilent has contracted with *WebEx Communications, Inc.* of San Jose, California, a premier provider of infrastructure services and applications, to host online remote conferencing and support.

A Real-Time, Real-Life Online Support Scenario

Michael, the Agilent Response Center Engineer, responds to a phone call from a customer named Joe, by initiating an interactive remote support session. Joe says he cannot see line spectra when viewing chromatographic data from his Agilent

1100 Series LC/MSD Trap. Michael confirms that Joe's ChemStation controller has Internet access, creates a remote support session, provides the web address and password for the meeting, and asks Joe to join him online (Figure 1).

Figure 1. WebEx *Meetings in Progress*

To enable a remote view of the customer's system, Michael asks Joe to share his data analysis application from the "Welcome" screen. Only those applications specifically selected will be shared, and only to customer-approved support personnel (Figure 2).

Now Michael can see Joe's LC/MSD Trap data analysis window on his PC in the Response Center, just as if he were sitting in front of Joe's ChemStation. All this is done solely with Joe's permission and participation. Joe has full control over access to his system and with one click at any time can immediately terminate the online remote session. Michael explains that he can see what Joe is doing on his ChemStation and can either provide step-by-step assistance or take control of the application. Joe decides to allow Michael to control his system remotely and makes that menu selection (Figure 3). Again, with one mouse click, Joe can resume control of his system.
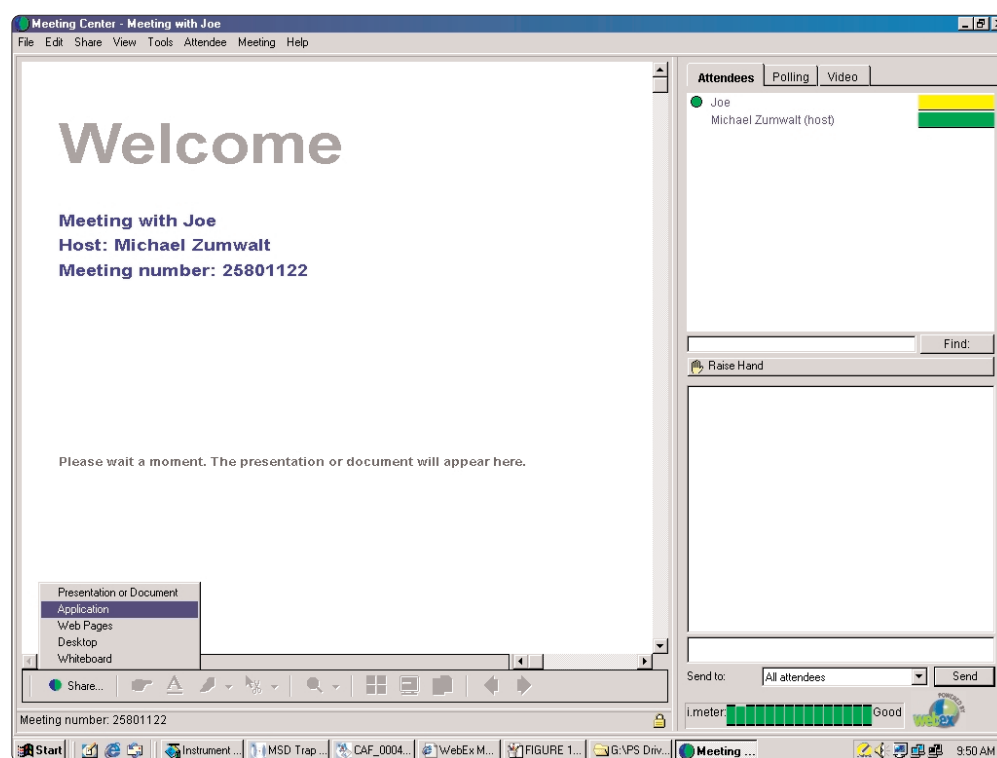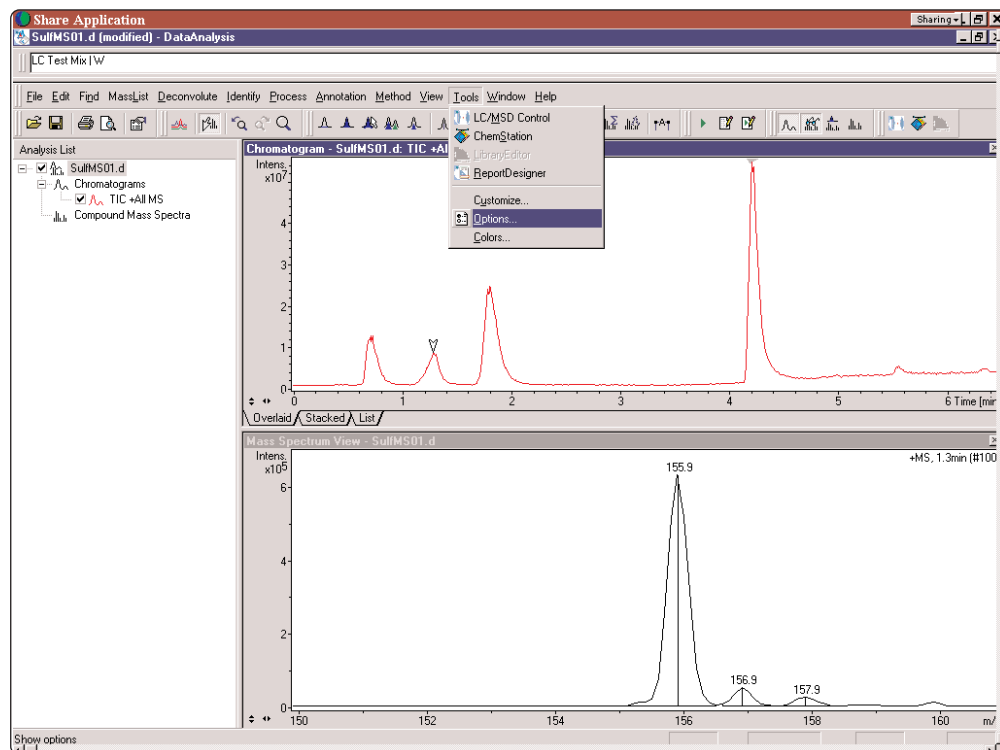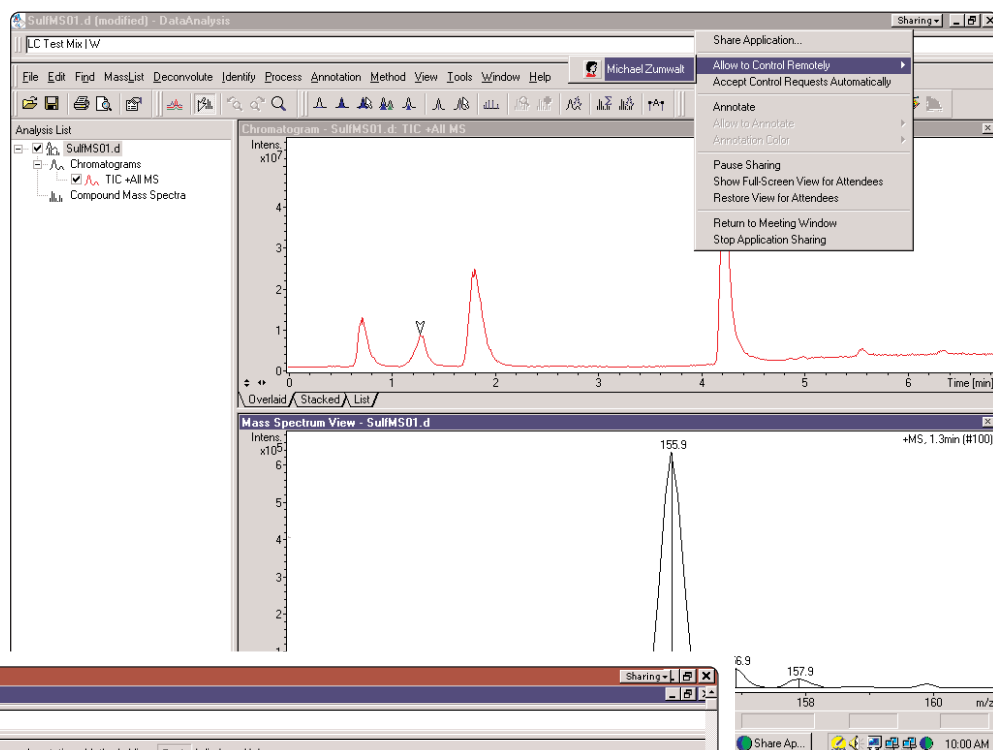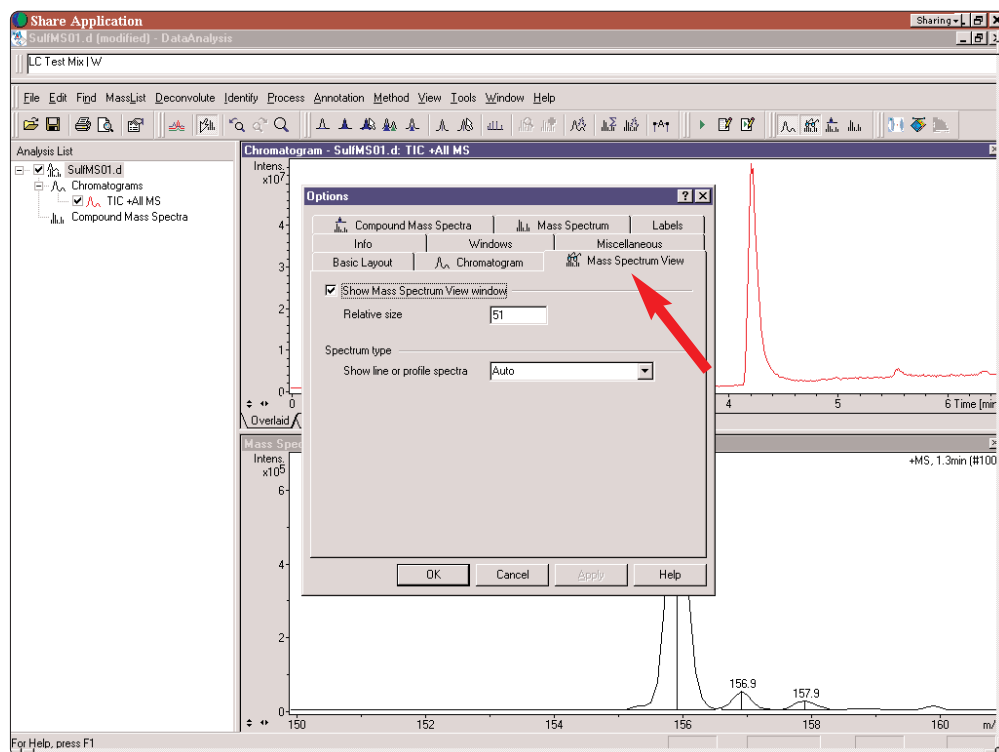

Figure 2. Remote session
Welcome

Michael takes Joe one step at a time through the selections required to choose and view line spectra in his data analysis application (Figures 4, 5 and 6).
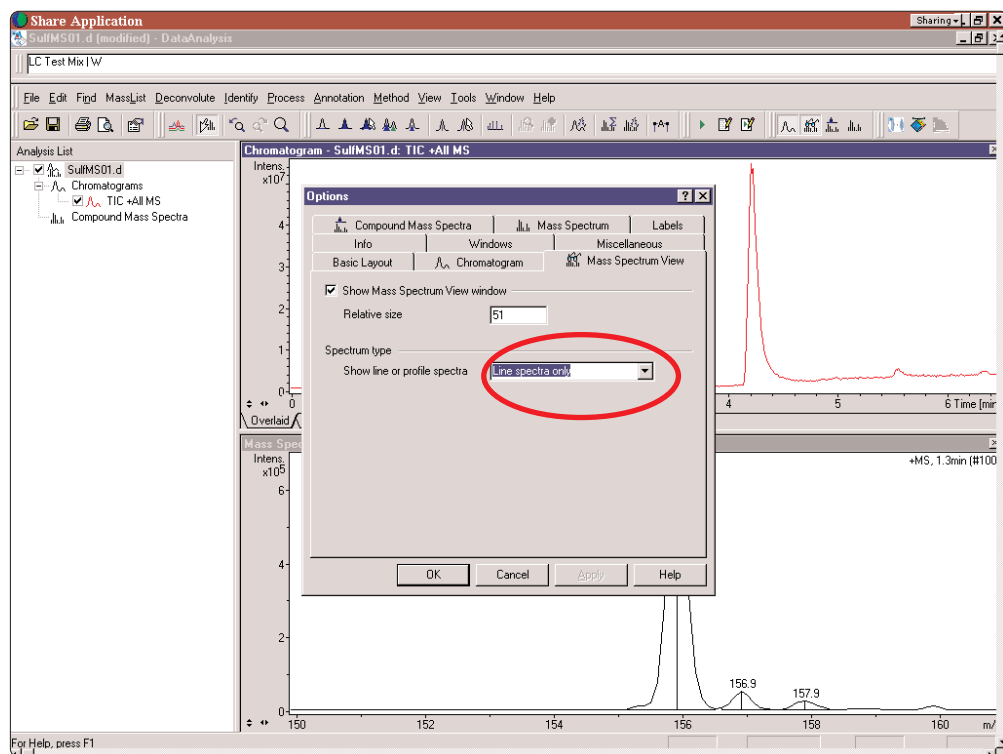
Figure 3. Select *Allow to Control Remotely*

Figure 4. Select *Options*

Figure 5. Select the *Mass Spectrum View* tab

Figure 6. Choose *Line spectra only*

Now when Joe clicks
on a part of the
chromatogram to
view spectra, the
mass spectra view
displays line spectra
(Figure 7).

At this point Michael
asks Joe to resume
control of his Chem-
Station, and confirms
that Joe understands
how to make the
selections to view
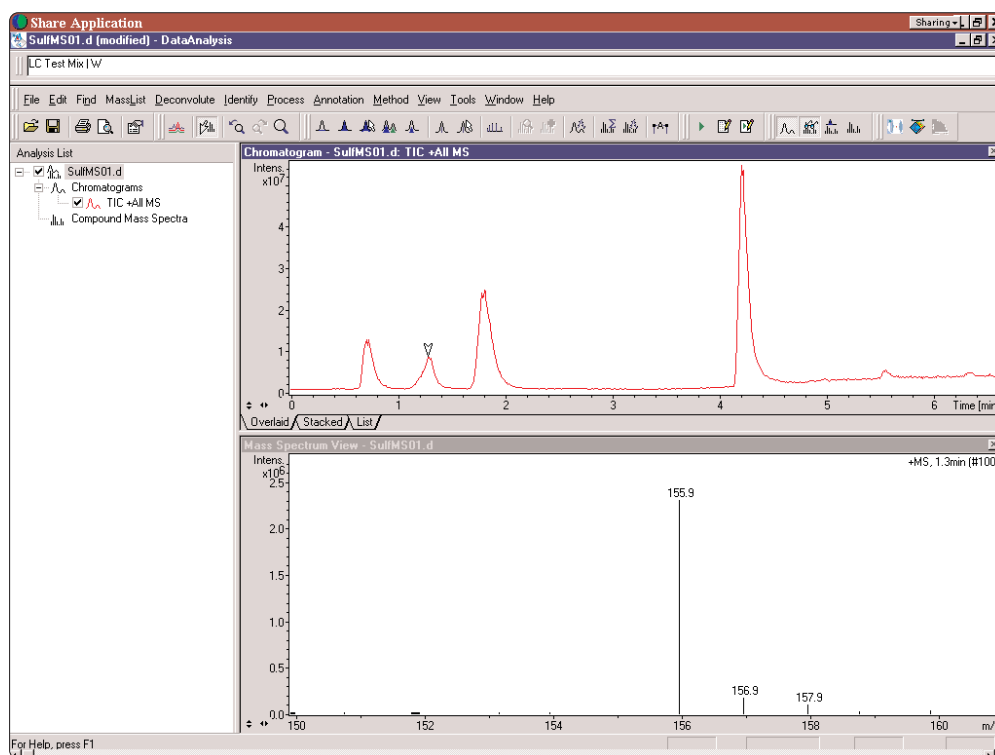the data in the for-
mat desired.

Figure 7. *Line Spectra View*

Additional Capabilities

This real-world, real-time example illustrates one
possible use of Agilent's powerful online support
capability. The customer was able to have his
problem solved quickly, with a visual interaction
that far exceeded the relatively low level of com-
munications possible over the phone or by email.
But the examples do not end there. The Agilent
online remote support system may be applied to a
wide variety of situations:

• View, diagnose, and solve problems online

• Run applications to ensure proper installation
  and configuration

• Demonstrate applications

• Download patches or updates to customer's
  computer

• Upload customer files for analysis

• Include other support personnel for expert
  consultation

• Include other customer personnel to share
  information

• Interact using text chat

• Show and annotate diagrams, schematics, and
  videos

Conclusion

The Agilent online remote support system is the result of years of experience and development. It is designed to:

• Save customer time and resources

• Enable scheduled and real-time remote system access and communications

• Isolate and resolve problems quickly

• Enable expert consultation in real time

• Enable focused individual or group training and application assistance

• Ensure the security of customer assets, data, and intellectual property

The Agilent online remote support combines thorough understanding of the support process with powerful state-of-the-art application tools to provide cost-effective support for Agilent systems.

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