



The Nomadic Office

Jim Carroll, C.A.

In his book, *Nomadic Workers – Business Organizations and Strategies for the New Millennium*, set for release in 1998, Jim Carroll explores how a new generation of aggressive technopreneur is establishing themselves on the economic horizon.

One of his points is that the “wired world” is seeing the emergence of the “nomadic worker” – an individual who establishes a career and lifestyle that is second to none. This new technopreneur plugs into a global economy that demands that their skills and capabilities be accessible anywhere.

This isn't a theme that he simply talks about – it is a reality that he lives.

Jim and his wife Christa, work out of a wired home located in Mississauga, Ontario. Their story is similar to that of the many other nomadic workers already found in the economy today.



Jim, a Chartered Accountant, spent twelve years with the world's largest public accounting firm. “In 1990, tired of working for a large bureaucracy, I decided to step out on my own,” he notes. “It was a pretty brave thing to do, given that a recession was just starting.” Yet he enjoyed instant and rewarding success, establishing a thriving and profitable consulting practice in the space of just a few short months, a fact he attributes to

his ability to master the need for just-in-time knowledge by using global information networks. “I equipped myself with the best darn technology I could, convinced that this was one of the tools by which I could establish my skills and convince people of my role.”



His efforts paid off in 1994, when his first book rocketed to the #1 position in the *Financial Post* and many other publications. It was at that point that he needed assistance. Like many nomadic workers, his solution was the essence of simplicity. “My wife, also a Chartered Accountant, quit her job as the Financial Comptroller of a large packaged goods company, in order to help out.”

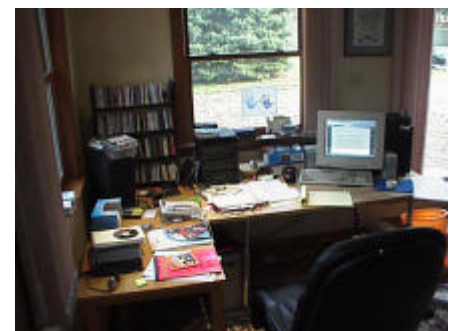
That led to the first of many challenges. “It's kind of a unique social experiment, having the both of you working at home,” he says. “When both of you work at home, the living quarters tend to get a little cramped. What with the media work I do, we had the strange situation in which all kinds of prominent CBC personalities were trampling through the house, walking past our bedrooms, in order to interview me. We had to do something.”

That something was a 1300 sq ft. addition to the home, a project that Jim and Christa undertook in 1996.

“Christa designed the addition using a PC based architecture program,” Jim noted. “And I set out to build the ultimate wired home.”

Today, their office environment is indicative of the type of work quarters that many nomadic workers are establishing for themselves. The home features a high speed local area network that extends to every room in the house, with up to six computers linked in at any one time. A high speed connection to the Internet, three phone lines, and other communication tools plug him into the world.

The home office itself is some 300 sq. ft. “But the office isn't the only place to work,” notes Jim. “I can plug in anywhere.” In the summertime, Jim can often be found outside on the deck at 5AM, writing a chapter for one of his many books. “I'm the only guy in the neighborhood with a network jack on the deck,” he wryly notes. “Next step? I need a waterproof PC – the pool is but five feet away!”



“I'm living today what I think will be the dominant corporate model of the future,” notes Jim. “I'm a nomadic worker – I hire my skills, capabilities and talent to companies, using the tools of the wired world.”