What are the differences between RECON Multi-Location Synchronization Engine or RetailEdge Island Mobile POS?

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RECON Multi-Location Synchronization Engine or RetailEdge Island Mobile POS are both based on synchronizing data to allow local data to keep your business running when your connection to the internet is slow or down. Here are some differences and answers to commonly asked questions

1. When Do I Need a Full RECON License vs. a RetailEdge Island License?

You would need RECON for a multi-location environment if you need:

- a. the ability to track inventory quantities.
- the ability to sell out of multiple locations.
- the ability to track different sales tax jurisdictions.

RetailEdge Island would be used if you need:

- A separate workstation for a location that can't always connect to the main database in the location.
- You need a workstation that can run regardless of whether it has access to the main database in a location or not.

Both RetailEdge Island Mobile POS and RECON synchronization work in a similar manner. Both allow you to run the location (RECON) or workstation (Island) when disconnected from the main location and will synch up with the main locations data when it can. This is a very powerful feature and one of the key limitations to cloud based systems. In a multi-location operation, if your connection to the

internet gets cut at the store your business can continue to run without interruption. Also if your internet connection becomes slow, your business does not suffer since all the data is local to the workstation or location and so the access is fast.

2. What Data Synchronizes?

All data goes everywhere. This is also a very important feature of our RECON and Island technologies. This allows you to be in one location and create transfer orders, manage inventory, and change any other piece of information you want for any location. This also allows you to see customer purchase histories, gift cards, store credits, house charge balances to flow around to all locations or workstations.

3. How Quickly Does the Data Move Around?

The synchronization happens every 2 minutes by default. But you can speed it up (up to 1 minute) or slow it down depending on your needs.

4. What is the difference between a RetailEdge Client/Additional Workstation License and an Island License?

RetailEdge Client Workstation

A RetailEdge Client Workstation in a network environment will start up and connect to the main database across the network (LAN). So when you post a change to or create a new sale, item, etc. in RetailEdge, you are actually posting into the main database for the store on another workstation. In an Island Workstation you are posting to data on the workstation, the synchronization engine in the background moves the data between the main workstation and the Island when it can. In a LAN environment a client is much more commonly used for a secondary workstation, because LANs are pretty robust and reliable these days and because a client license is less expensive.

RetailEdge Island Workstation

However an Island is useful in environments where you might be using a secondary workstation:

- on a tablet, laptop or convertible that you might move outside of the LAN. This might be for a workstation that moves into a warehouse location for checking inventory.
- for a workstation that might be used for multiple purposes (i.e., laptop for home use and also for trunk shows)
- for a workstation that absolutely can not go down. A client workstation relies on the data on the main workstation to run and the LAN to be working. So if a main workstation goes down, or the LAN goes down because of a cut cable, bad WIFI, bad network card, etc. then your client will too. In a multiple workstation environment where you have to have all lanes running this can be a real problem. RetailEdge Island solves this. It is possible to convert a client into a main workstation and restore a backup and re-point the other clients to the new main workstation, however this takes time. RetailEdge works with businesses where secondary workstations being down would be a real problem (e.g., high volume sales operations, yogurt shops, multi-lane grocery, etc.)

5. Can I use a Client License to access data on the server remotely?

We don't recommend this configuration. We have users who have tried this and it works, but it is not going to be your most reliable method of accessing the data. If you need limited access to your data in a location, it is easier to setup a client in the location and give yourself remote access to this workstation via a remote access software like LogMeIn pro (using two-factor authentication of course).

6. How Many RECON Client Licenses Do I Need?

If you need RECON, then you will need a RECON client at each of the satellite locations like spokes on a wheel. One location is chosen to be the main/master (hub) location and each additional location is on the rim of the tire and RECON is the "spoke" that ties the location to the hub. Once the information is sent from a location to the hub, the hub distributes new/edited information out to each of the locations via their copy of RECON Client.

7. Can I have RECON and RetailEdge Island(s) together?

Sure. Many multi-location businesses have a managers/owners with laptops so they can work on the system from anywhere anytime. An Island workstation would allow you to do this. Or you might have a "location" like the Mall that has multiple kiosks that don't have inventory quantity needs. So you can have Islands at each Kiosk at the Mall location.

8. Do I need a huge server to run RECON?

No. Usually we will setup RECON on the main workstation as one of the locations. Once you get past 3 locations, it is advisable to move the RECON hub/master database to another machine. This does not need to be a huge machine and you can get an inexpensive machine that will work for about $300-$400. Also if you don't want to invest in another machine that you have to manage, we have affordable options starting at $35/month for hosting your data on a remote cloud server.

9. Do I need to purchase RECON to have a second location in RetailEdge?

No. Many people create "virtual locations" and use this location to manage inventory quantities in a warehouse or stock room. So if I have a stockroom or warehouse and want to see what it in that location at any time, you simply add the location. There is no additional cost to do this. And if this "virtual location" is actually a physical location that has employees working in it, you can setup an Island Workstation and be able to manage the location remotely (but the Island is still associated with the main location and can't sell out the "virtual location"). Again the limitation here is if you want to sell out of this other location, you will need RECON.

10. This sounds complicated, how do I do this myself?

It really is not that complicated, but we are there to help you every step of the way. Part of what you pay for when you purchase an Island or RECON is for us to help you migrate your data to the new machine, install, start and test the synchronization process.