



Figure 2: FTE Desktop (Present)

Fortunately, in the early 90s', just as the economic pressure on the data production personnel at the AFFTC was escalating, new technologies were emerging on the world stage that offered cost saving alternatives to the way data processing had been done in the preceding decades. AFFTC data production personnel realized that Web technology offered a platform independent, single interface solution with programmable business rules. A WWW browser, essentially a client to the software server located distant from the user, could run on a PC, McIntosh or a Unix Workstation. The server software, the actual data analysis code, and the data, could reside across the network on an appropriate computing platform. The WWW offered "universal readership"², meaning once information was available it was accessible from any type of computer, from any location, by any authorized person via a single interface. This was the capability exploited to redefine the data processing task at the AFFTC.

3 Data Processing Redefined

FTE clients now point their Web browsers at a hypertext markup language page to process flight test data. The steps involved to produce the desired data product are embedded in the server page. The client user is presented with a workflow chart, that describes any sub-task dependencies, offers help, provides prompting for required in-process information and/or decisions, and displays progress and status of the job. The scripts that specify the steps in the processing and issue the commands that do the processing are now developed for the server only, and are activated with user commands received from the HTML page viewed by the client with their browser.

The server runs the data analysis software and the HTML server software linked via Unix scripts, utilities, and tools. Each client runs browser software, which offers a universal interface access to all types of users and systems, as shown in Figure 3.