

# Thin Client Mobility

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### Thin Client Mobility

It is estimated that three quarters of workers spend at least one quarter of their work time in remote locations. The rapidly growing trend toward mobility means that the workforce is becoming bigger and more disconnected all the time. Because of this, it is essential that companies examine options for organizing the workforce around mobile workers in a way that allows for optimal productivity and cost effectiveness.

There is no doubt that mobility makes organizations and workers more productive. Organizations with a mobile workforce are also more competitive, and, from a human resources standpoint, the ability to work more productively from remote locations and even from home is an attractive benefit to perspective employees. In addition, the ability to employ a remote workforce that can operate effectively enables companies to cut costs on office space.

As the workforce becomes increasingly mobile and remote, technology must cater to a new set of user needs. To enable mobile productivity, enterprise organizations are investing a great deal of money in existing networks, which consist of both hardware and software components. Mobile and remote workers can use a variety of devices, including PCs, laptops, PDAs, tablet PCs, and cell phones. Through the use of various communications protocols, these devices can access an organization's virtual private network (VPN) in order to obtain critical information in a timely manner, but since there are different protocols for different operating systems, each of them requires time, specific knowledge, and big budgets to sustain them once they are deployed. Because of this, many companies seek a simpler solution.

In determining how to enable a mobile workforce, companies need to consider some basic issues. Among the most relevant of these issues is the TCO (total cost of ownership) of a particular type of application. TCO, which includes staffing, support and application upgrades, goes far beyond the initial cost of purchasing the hardware

or software. Another thing to consider is whether or how to leverage current investments. While existing hardware, software and infrastructure can be adapted for remote use, doing so is not always the most cost effective way to mobilize staff. Additional costs associated with user and support resource training may be relevant as well.

Also a consideration when deciding how to enable a mobile workforce is the issue of information security. This is particularly relevant as many organizations work to migrate all of their systems and data into a digital environment. Access to business critical applications in an increasingly digital environment is a key issue as well. As more organizations become digital, there will be more of a need for users to access to applications whether they are in the office, at home, or in a hotel.

The forces that drive mobility, that is, the specific conditions that affect how effective mobile employees can be offsite, include accessibility of the enterprise from mobile locations, the degree to which productivity is possible using mobile devices, and budgets for technology that enables mobility. In many cases, the most effective way for employees to connect remotely to the enterprise is through a thin client protocol. Thin client software enables users to quickly and easily access data from a central terminal while reducing costs associated with complicated infrastructure and administrative tasks needed to maintain a network of PCs.

Though IT departments have been reluctant to use thin clients until recently, new developments have made the technology more attractive within organizations, and it is being increasingly deployed to internal networks. One reason for this is that many systems now include standard browser plug-ins for client software so more hardware can be supported more easily. Systems can now be configured so that users can access applications via intranet web pages, and state-of-the-art load-balancing features mean that central servers perform better as well. Even during a significant system upgrade or failure, computing can continue uninterrupted with the

use of server farms that can span data centers. Software protocols known as Enterprise Mobile Applications (EMAs) are designed so that mobile employees can operate better and manage workflow more effectively. EMAs also enable an organization to make better use of current assets. Field sales, field service, maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO), and plant maintenance can all be mobilized effectively when EMAs are implemented.

Of course, decisions about whether and how to mobilize a workforce depend to some extent on an organization's budget. While existing hardware and software can be adapted for use in a thin client environment, it is often more cost effective to implement a server-based thin client system that only requires maintenance and upgrades to the server. Since staffing is typically 50-75% of a computer system's three-year cost, the cost of servers and software is easily offset by the reduction in staffing costs characterized by thin client computing systems. While there is no environment where thin client computing is the best solution for every application and every desktop, traditional computing methods are rarely the best solution for every situation either. For companies looking to optimize technology solutions, there is almost always a place for thin clients in some capacity, particularly as the natural progression from desktop clients to mobile clients continues to occur as expected.

In seeking solutions, thin client technology has several relevant characteristics that make it a logical choice. First, thin client server computing allows organizations to take existing computing infrastructure further. It is completely server-based so that applications can be deployed entirely on the server – near the data. Thin Client Server Computing (TCSC) can also turn any device into a client. Because the application is separated from its execution, it can be accessed from any client device, allowing for bandwidth and client-independent performance.

In cases where some members of an organization need more traditional, high-powered technology, an integrated balance of both traditional and thin client

computing models can be utilized. For example, in a case where billing, payroll, and other processes can be driven by SAP but engineers may need to retain the use of high-powered NT design stations, TCSC can be used to deploy SAP not only to thin clients but also to NT workstations.

Eventually, as the use of TCSC grows, service providers who manage applications will emerge so that organizations can outsource the responsibility for entire applications. For example, an ASP for Microsoft Office would be responsible for loading the application onto servers, patching it, maintaining it, and troubleshooting it. Users would then be given web addresses and passwords to access the application as needed.

Often, the decision-making involved in setting up the best computing solution for an organization's needs is best made with some outside help. For example, a company like AT Labs, a Silicon Valley-based provider of simplified, thin-client computing technology solutions worldwide, can work with enterprises to implement state-of-the-art thin client computing solutions that fit their needs. Providers like AT Labs are committed to developing technologies that enable mobility and productivity, and clients benefit from the results of extended research and development teams that focus on developing technologies for the future. With current technologies that are more scalable and robust, organizations can easily increase user capacity and manage remote networks in the most cost effective way with the help of companies that focus on thin client solutions.

### **About AT Labs, Inc.**

Founded in the heart of Silicon Valley, AT Labs Inc. (AT Labs) is the fastest growing provider of simplified mobile wireless networks using Thin Client technology. AT Labs focuses on developing wireless Thin Client products to provide low-cost and secured access to all intranet and internet applications.

### **What is our mission?**

Our goal is to provide you with the best mobile wireless computing solutions, the most advanced technology, and superior technical support. We have the expertise to expand your success—both now and in the future.

### **What do we make?**

Wireless Thin Client computing is the next evolution in enterprise productivity for both general purpose and application-specific tasks. With everything on a central server, all users—wherever they may be in the field—have the same access to the same applications at the same time. If there is a problem with any individual unit, its data is safe on the server.

Wireless Thin Client appliances from AT Labs provide you with longer battery life, which saves you money in power consumption and conserves your storage space. Ultra-slim, ultra-light, and ultra-powerful—this wireless appliance replaces old PC problems with 21<sup>st</sup>-century expertise and power.

Desktop Thin Clients feature everything you've become accustomed to with regular PC's—minus the hardware and application headaches. Windows, Web, Java, and mainframe applications run just like on a regular PC. Updating and management are controlled from a single point, making all changes universal and immediate. Your entire network functions as a solid unit.

Easy to setup, each NetTerminal™ is preconfigured with embedded Windows or Linux operating systems. Plug-n-Play connectivity gets you up and running fast. Standard NetAdmin™ remote management software provides you with total control of your network.