

# Why Thin-Client?

## The advantages of Server Based Computing

On a traditional old-fashioned computer network (fat client), each client runs software using its own processor and, usually, from a local copy of the program. This has a number of downsides. Software must be installed individually on each computer. This can take a significant amount of time and because software versions and settings may vary, it may run differently on each computer.

Imagine being able to break out of a continuous cycle of upgrades, time-consuming maintenance and unreliability. By moving the software from clients to central, fast, secure servers, you can! Server-Based Computing (SBC) revolutionizes how computers are used, maintained and purchased. As software is run centrally (not just stored centrally) on very high performance servers, the speed or age of the client is unimportant. Looking after an SBC network takes a fraction of the time compared to a traditional network and furthermore, offers better performance at a lower cost.

### Thin-Clients: Saving Time - Saving Cost!

Each dot in this example represents installing a single application. As you can see, this is a process which has to be repeated many times on a fat-client network:



Each thin-client server can handle at least 40 clients, meaning one simple task on one server is equal to 40 repetitive tasks on networked fat-client PC systems.

This is just one example of a common management task: consider software upgrades and tweaks, configuration changes, dealing with hardware problems and troubleshooting problems.

Your time is expensive and in limited supply. Thin-clients give you **0% management & 100% productivity.**

Fat-client PCs can be quickly converted into thin-clients with our ThinIT product. This only takes a couple of minutes. PCs become commodity devices; they can be easily swapped out or replaced if they fail as there is next to no configuration required.

Old clients can be converted into fast thin-clients, so there is no longer any need to throw valuable equipment away!



When adding new machines, you can add dedicated thin-clients. These have no moving parts and so run silently without requiring large fans to dissipate heat. They are also considerably smaller than a standard PC. Thin-clients can be completely remotely managed. This even extends as far as switching them on and off and upgrading firmware (we can do all this for you from our offices).

You may wish to retain some fat-clients for certain tasks such as CAD/CAM, MIDI or video editing. We can configure these to be well-integrated with the network. Fat-clients can be run in a hybrid mode where most applications are run in a thin-client mode from your application servers whilst still allowing access to certain more intensive local applications. This is especially useful with laptops which you may have concerns about connecting to your network for security reasons. By running software entirely from application servers, you get a degree of insulation from viruses, etc.



By adding Citrix Presentation Server, you get access to client devices such as USB memory sticks, digital cameras, data-logging and sound input/output. You can do broadcasted demonstrations and you can even hot-desk between different machines instantly. You can also access your network from home and it will look and behave identically to accessing it from within school. This means you don't need to worry about people not having the correct software or being infected by viruses. Remote access allows all users to access work and applications in a familiar way.



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## All your questions answered

### Is it expensive?

Compared to a fat-client network, no. Purchase cost is around the same or cheaper. Installation cost is significantly less. Ongoing support costs are much cheaper too; you don't need to pay for each client to be supported.

### Is it hard to install?

On the physical side it is similar to a fat-client network except that the thin-clients are very much smaller and don't arrive in huge boxes.

When it comes to the software, the installation and configuration takes a fraction of the time. Only the servers need to have software installed and configured; the thin-clients are just plugged into the network and are instantly ready to go - no configuration is required. We usually perform the software installation for you.

### What about my existing machines and network?

Your existing PCs can be converted to behave as thin-clients using our ThinIT software. So if you are migrating an old system the costs are quite low. This will also extend the life of your PCs and you won't have to upgrade them until they are about seven years old, then you can replace them with lower cost thin-clients instead of regular fat-client PCs.

### Can I run all my existing software?

Yes. Virtually all software runs in an identical fashion to how it would on a fat-client network. Occasionally, some poorly written software may have problems, but this is usually down to it not being network compatible; the same software would fail on a modern fat-client network. Some software requires a specific piece of hardware linked to the machine it is running on. In such situations, there is still a place for a few fat-clients.

### How reliable are thin-clients?

Very reliable. There are no moving parts or local software to become corrupted, so they just keep running. Even if you are unlucky enough to have a client fail, it can be quickly swapped for another as there is no configuration required.



### Are they fast enough?

A system which is properly built and configured to your needs will provide the speed you need. It will be at least equivalent to the speed of a standalone machine but in many cases will be faster.

If you do need more speed you can upgrade the servers and the network, you don't need to upgrade the thin-clients unless they are particularly old.

### How often will I have to upgrade the whole network?

The thin-client units will give you at least seven to eight years of reliable service, perhaps more. The servers will probably need upgrading every three years as with standard PCs. However with only one server per forty clients, the upgrade isn't a major overhaul and costs a fraction of a fat-client network upgrade.

### I've been told thin-clients don't work.

Just like building a fat-client network, a car or a house, there is no substitute for experience and specialist knowledge. We've seen some awful thin-client networks installed by other companies, but we've seen awful fat-client installations too! We've a lot of experience fixing and troubleshooting other networks so that they deliver what they are capable of.

### Surely this is too good to be true?

Not at all. We've been selling thin-client networks for over 10 years (we were involved in the first one in a UK school) and have an extremely loyal customer base. Feel free to get in touch and let us put you in contact with one of our schools who can demonstrate how thin-clients make their lives easier every day.



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