

What is a Thin Client?

A thin client is a present day dumb-terminal. It is a terminal which connects to a variety of hosts. The user has access to legacy green screen applications, Web based applications, email and Windows applications. Thin clients almost always connect via Ethernet and TCPIP.

How do Thin Clients work?

A thin client does not *run* any application. All applications run on servers. The thin client/terminal displays the results of the host based application. For example: when you use a browser to access a web site, the application is running on the web server and the results are displayed on your screen. When you use a browser, you are essentially using your PC as a dumb terminal.

What is the difference between a PC and Thin Client?

A thin client does not *run* any application. A PC runs applications. For example, if you want to use Microsoft Word on a PC, you would load Word on that PC then run the program. If you want to use Microsoft Word on a thin client, the thin client would access a Terminal/Citrix server and run that application on the server. The user would not realize that the application is running on a server because it looks and acts exactly like a PC. But... the application is running on the server and only a picture of the screen is displayed on the thin client.

What hosts do Thin Clients connect to?

Thin clients attach to virtually all host types. Older style legacy terminals only attached to one host type. Thin Clients attach to: Windows 2000 Terminal Server, Citrix Metaframe server, Web servers, Email servers, Mainframe, AS400, Unix and Linux servers.

How does Terminal/Citrix server technology work?

A Terminal/Citrix server can be seen as an oversized, multi-user PC. All PC application run on the server. The thin client is sent a picture of the screen which is displayed for the user. To the user, it looks exactly like they are using a PC. But, the thin client is not running the application, it is just displaying the screens which are running on the server.

Why is it better to use a Thin client verses a PC?

It is not always better. Thin client technology has it's place. Thin clients save money because they have no moving parts, take minutes to setup or swap out and are very secure.

- For example, if you have a programmer or web site developer who is a heavy user who loads many applications on their PC, they should never use a thin client.
- On the other hand, if you have a warehouse supervisor who needs access to an AS400 application, email and occasional spreadsheet, a thin client is the best choice.
- All application software (word processor, email, browser virus protection, etc.) only has to be loaded on the server one time. A typical server can serve about 50 users. So you don't have to load software 50 times, just one time! This benefit extends to upgrades/updates as well.
- If a thin client breaks, it takes minutes to swap out and the user is back up (all data and applications are on the server). If a PC breaks, it can take hours to reload applications and data, if it was even backed up.

Where are Thin Clients typically used?

Warehouse, shipping, manufacturing, point of sale, task based workers, replacements for green screen legacy terminals, shops converting from SNA to TCPIP, barcode data collection terminals, legacy job printing.

How do I determine which thin client is best for the application?

First, determine what host(s) the user needs access to. For example, ask the question: Will the user need access to the AS400? Mainframe? MS Word? Web? Once you determine which hosts and applications they need access to, select the client which matches those minimum requirements. Keep in mind that if a customer wants the user to have access to any PC based application they will need a Terminal/Citrix server (that is where those applications run).