

VARIED ALTERNATIVES TO THICK DESKTOPS

Four thin clients in the test laboratory

We examined four so-called thin clients. Such light computers can only work with software that runs on a server (see preceding article); locally there is almost nothing to be installed. As a result, they are almost impossible to crash.

Peter Kulche

SILENT BREADBIN

HP t5720

HP is an important supplier of thin clients to mainly medium sized and large-scale enterprises. We examined their t5720 model. If necessary it is possible to mount this beautiful 'bread bin' on the back of a monitor. Positive: the appliance has both two ps2 and four USB ports. You can therefore use your existing keyboard and mouse. Unfortunately the wide-screen monitor that we had here was too exacting: the HP t5720 provides a maximum of 1600 pixels for width whereas the monitor needs 1680. The 'stretched' image is not sharp. On the HP t5730 model that has come out in the meantime, the graphic performances have been improved. It is a windfall that the thin client makes absolutely no noise. The computer operates on Windows XP Embedded and can handle all current terminal server standards. We were able to login to the client without any problem via Internet Explorer 7 on King Online, a web application offered via the Citrix standard. HP optionally supplies extensive management tools for remote configuration.



Price: € 399,- ('as from price' for the T5730 model which succeeds the T5720)
Info: www.hp.nl



SLIM SCREEN COMPUTER

RieCom iL3610

This RieCom thin client is a discreet 19 inch LCD screen with built-in computer: an AMD system on 500 MHz. That sounds hopelessly 1999, but the screen computer runs Linux, not Windows. The browser Opera and the client software for RDP and Citrix based terminal servers are already pre-installed. In the configuration screen (one of the few menus) you can either set the terminal yourself or you can manage other terminals. Next time they can start with a new log-in name, a different screen resolution, et cetera. Opera satisfies, but does not run very smoothly on this machine. Furthermore websites look a little different, because different fonts are used. But logging on via the browser on a Citrix based service in the RDC Data centre, our test application 'King Online' runs without problems. In other words: an uncomplicated system at a keen price (since it includes a monitor).



Price: € 295,-
Info: www.riecom.eu



THIN CLIENT LAPTOP

Toshiba L40-17D'Athena'

Initially we thought we had received an incorrect machine. Do we actually see a sharp Toshiba Satellite notebook here? Inquiry learns that it concerns a specially adapted model with Windows XP Embedded on board, running from a 1 GB solid state disk. It does not contain a hard disk. The laptop can do everything that a fixed thin client can do, but then at any location you desire. However, a network connection is required: wireless or wired. On the road you could surf the mobile network (HSDPA) via an inserted PC card. The Dutch company Acropolis has a broad range of 'Athena' thin clients and supplies, specifically, this adjusted Toshiba, among others to hospitals, as a mobile working place, and to mechanics who use it to access their work and product schemes on the road. The greatest advantage of a thin-client laptop is that absolutely no data gets lost in the event of loss or theft. Via the supplied management software the settings, extra programs and updates can be pushed to the laptop by remote. The 15 inch screen suffers from glare considerably, so it is best to keep it out of the sun.



Price: from approx. € 800,-
Info: www.acropolis.nl



WIDE SCREEN – WORKING HORSE

Samsung 220TN

With the Samsung 220 TN you not only put a well performing wide screen (22 inch) on your desk, but also a thin client computer; which is processed within the body. A small minor point is that you must absolutely connect a USB keyboard and mouse; it does not have any ps2 ports for your old computer bits. This point is more than made up for by the excellent screen. It also has an excellent viewing angle, which is important with such a wide surface. Such a good monitor invites image processing, but precisely that is no option: the thin client is too thin for graphics jobs. A widescreen is, of course, handy for two applications side by side. The Samsung has Windows XP Embedded on board, has no problems with our Citrix server, and can also handle the RDP protocol. Remarkable: it can also take over the control of normal PCs via the VNC standard. Nice extras are the integrated speakers, digital camera and microphone – although the network manager probably doesn't have these very high on his wish list.



Price: € 755,-
Info: www.samsung.nl

