



WHITE PAPER

The Alternative to Citrix

Ericom's Complete Presentation
Virtualization Solution

*From Windows Terminal Servers and
Virtual Desktops, to Legacy Host Systems*

Ericom Software
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Overview

Server-based computing (SBC) is finally achieving an accepted status as the preferred method for managed access and delivery of applications and desktops. This is due in part, to advances in networking infrastructure, as well as in the Microsoft® Windows® operating system itself.

Despite this recognition, the reality is that only a small percentage of organizations that should be using SBC actually are using it. Moreover, most of those organizations are limiting the use of SBC to the departmental level, rather than applying it throughout the organization. We estimate the utilization rate of SBC at less than 10 percent of corporate desktops worldwide. That is a very low number considering all the proven benefits of SBC.

The reason for such a low adoption rate is that until very recently, organizations were trapped between having to choose an entry-level solution that did not provide sufficient benefits and a pricey solution that was expensive and complex to deploy. On the entry-level, Windows includes built-in support for Terminal Services, so organizations can deploy it at very little extra cost. Unfortunately, Windows Terminal Services is appropriate only for small-size and simple deployments. Thus it was difficult to demonstrate the value of SBC using only Windows Terminal Services.

Citrix, on the other hand, offers much broader functionality, but at both a significantly higher price and level of complexity. Just setting up a Citrix presentation demo or a proof of concept usually requires several days of onsite installation and configuration by a certified Citrix professional. This proves to be an insurmountable hurdle for many organizations, preventing SBC from taking off.

By contrast, Ericom® PowerTerm® WebConnect - the alternative to Citrix - enables organizations to implement large-scale deployments of server-based computing, while at the same time enjoying multiple cost-benefits and simplicity in architecture.

This paper discusses the merits of choosing the alternative to Citrix.

Enterprise-Wide Server-Based Computing

The term enterprise-wide server-based computing (SBC) applies to an IT environment in which applications, desktops and data reside on Windows Terminal Servers, virtual desktops, legacy hosts and other systems. The local workstation, serving as a terminal only, provides remote access to these applications and data without actually hosting them. Within this paradigm, corporate applications, data, and user access (remote as well as local) are centrally managed and administered.

The multiple benefits of enterprise-wide SBC range from lessening the impact of IT vulnerabilities, optimizing IT operations, enhancing the user experience, and lowering the costs of remote desktop and application management, to business continuity and disaster recovery. Organizations that have implemented SBC also enjoy an enhanced competitive edge and better alignment of IT with the business objectives.

Why is there such a dire need for an alternative to Citrix?

In a word: choice. One is hard-pressed to find an area of IT in which a monopoly exists to the extent that it did in the SBC arena. For years, customers were faced with an almost

total lack of choice when selecting an SBC solution. Lack of choice means paying more for licenses and maintenance and getting less in terms of the features you really need, such as ease of management, ease of use and quality of service.

Lack of choice also stifles progress: Without real competition there is no incentive for innovation, despite the fact that there is still much room for improvement in SBC, including lowering complexities, reducing costs and more.

The complexity of SBC is perceived to be greater than that of locally installing applications. This is a significant misperception. SBC actually reduces complexity, due, in part, to its ability to centralize the management of applications and access permissions and ensure data security. The perceived complexity of SBC stems from the actual complexity of the available SBC solutions, rather than being inherent to the concept itself.

Hence, the preferred approach would be to use an SBC solution that reduces IT complexity by optimizing the use of existing hardware; automatically installing client updates; constantly providing an up-to-date view of available services without requiring manual refreshes; enabling remote administration and support; and delivering a true seamless experience to end-users.

Cost (both purchase price *and* total cost of ownership) is often a limiting factor. The combination of licenses, maintenance, hardware, consulting, integration, training and help-desk costs can be intimidating — even overwhelming.

Citrix addresses this situation by providing multiple versions of their packages. However, the high-end package incorporates every possible bell and whistle, while its lower-end package provides limited capabilities. Unfortunately, this approach often exacerbates the situation: The high-end solution is often overkill, raising costs even higher, while the low-end solution is inadequate in terms of providing scalability and upgrade choices. Moreover, the customer often discovers that upgrading from the low-end solution requires purchasing new licenses and retraining staff.

What is actually required is a single solution that is both powerful and easy to use, providing the core functionality organizations need, but foregoing extraneous “gold plating.”¹

How does Ericom PowerTerm WebConnect empower enterprises?

PowerTerm WebConnect aligns IT with business objectives and optimizes the application and desktop access infrastructure by providing the following:

- Enhanced mobility by eliminating the complexities of providing access to local and remote users, whether at the office, home, customer site, branch location or on the road.
- Access is device-independent, enabling users to connect interchangeably from Windows and Linux desktops and laptops, as well as from thin clients.
- Users can securely access their office servers and workstations from remote locations.

¹ The cost barrier is even more significant for organizations with multiple types of back-end systems (e.g., Terminal Servers, Virtual Desktops and legacy hosts). The preferred solution is a comprehensive product from a single vendor that can provide direct access to all required systems.

- Highly scalable system and application load-balancing allocates connections and applications to the optimal server, ensuring optimal use of server resources and a smooth, reliable user experience.
- Auto-refreshing icons, a feature unique to PowerTerm WebConnect, ensures that all users remain in-sync and are using the most current version of published applications. Any server-side changes — updates, changing the path to the server on which applications reside, etc. — are instantly, automatically and transparently reflected on user desktops. Moreover, users do not need to wait for deployments or updates, or to perform a manual refresh. This prevents operational and organizational discrepancies.
- For ease of use, end-users can launch remote applications in any way they choose — from the start menu, desktop icons, the built-in Web interface or the PowerTerm WebConnect Application Zone native interface — for faster, more intuitive interactions.
- Users can launch both remote and local applications from the same interface. Content is automatically redirected to the appropriate location.
- The IT infrastructure management environment increases overall scalability, reliability and stability and enhances asset management.

How does PowerTerm WebConnect reduce the cost of managing desktops?

- Corporate applications are installed, managed and updated on a limited set of secured servers located in the data center, instead of a multitude of workstations dispersed throughout the organization.
- Centralized management and control eliminates the need to define any settings at the user's desktop. In addition, the user interface can be published as an install-on-demand downloadable client, increasing staff efficiency.
- The built-in Remote Desktop Support tool enables IT staff to provide fast, real-time user support and troubleshooting, enhancing productivity.
- PowerTerm WebConnect supports thin-client computing. Thin-client devices are less expensive to purchase and have a much longer lifespan than the average PC. Moreover, all on-going maintenance and administration are performed entirely at the server level, with no need to service or upgrade individual user devices.

Deploying easily across the organization

- Provides access to a wide range of enterprise systems: Windows Terminal Server (including 64-bit servers), Virtual Desktops, Blade PCs, IBM® mainframe (zSeries®), IBM midrange AS/400 (iSeries®), UNIX, Linux, OpenVMS™ and more. Supports more than 35 legacy environments.
- PowerTerm WebConnect's affordability makes it possible to apply this access solution throughout the organization, rather than as a point solution only for select sectors.

Ensuring application access security

- For protection against hackers, a single port relay enables information to be published securely beyond the firewall, without the need to make public the applications, ports or IP addresses.

- Enterprise-level security includes support for SSL Gateway, Single Sign-on, two-factor authentication (such as RSA SecurID and Kerberos) and integration with leading SSL VPNs. Connections can be encrypted from clients to Terminal Servers, even across public networks.
- PowerTerm WebConnect enables organizations to comply with major regulatory standards (including SOX, JSOX and HIPAA) with features such as detailed logging and auditing and real-time monitoring of user sessions.

Comparative Highlights at a Glance: PowerTerm® WebConnect® Vs. Citrix Presentation Server™

Ericom PowerTerm WebConnect delivers access to centrally hosted and managed applications and desktops, with all the necessary security, reliability, performance and usability functionality. Ericom's strength and differentiation (see next page) lies in providing cost-effective connectivity to multiple back-end systems: Windows Terminal Servers, Virtual Desktops, Blade PCs and a wide range of legacy hosts.

On the other hand, Citrix Presentation Server is designed to manage only the Windows Terminal Server environment. Support for Virtual Desktops and Blade PCs will require an additional product: Citrix XenDesktop™, scheduled to be released sometime in 2008. Access to legacy hosts requires third-party offerings and does not provide centralized management.

Key Benefits and Differentiators

	Ericom	Citrix
Simplicity and ease of use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-tier architecture results in simpler and less complex deployments • 2 MB installation package on Terminal Servers • Server fully configured upon installation • Doesn't change system files • Simultaneously publishes several Windows applications • Complete installation and configuration process in under one hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 MB installation package for each Terminal Server (<i>100 times larger than Ericom's</i>) • Lengthy, complex installation and configuration • Replaces Windows system files • Publishes applications one at a time
On-demand infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Totally on-demand access • Clients automatically provisioned to end-user devices • Automatic client update even for restricted users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not on-demand access • User must download and manually install ICA client (or add-on software is required to install the client automatically)
Enterprise-wide application access solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides integrated access to applications residing on a wide range of application servers, including Windows Terminal Servers, Virtual Desktops, Blade PCs and many legacy hosts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides access only to Windows applications on Windows Terminal Servers
"GoToMyPC" functionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built-in feature of the product — a secure, on-premises solution at no additional cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External service — at an additional cost
Responsiveness to customers' needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ericom is open to its customers, including its R&D department • Ericom adds functionality in response to customer requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citrix is less responsive to customer needs, shielding its R&D from customers. Have you ever asked Citrix to develop a feature? Have they accommodated your specific needs?
Flexible pricing structure for enterprise-wide deployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$120-\$230 per concurrent user • A price point promoting enterprise-wide deployments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$400-\$600+ per concurrent user • A price point that forces customers into point solutions for a specific vertical application or a department; this is reflected by a 5% to 20% deployment within companies

Summary

Within the dynamic space of evolving desktop and application access and delivery paradigms, the concept of presentation virtualization is becoming a reality. Server-based computing (SBC) has achieved an accepted status as the preferred method for managed application and desktop access.

For a long time, this space was dominated by Citrix, for a simple reason: a lack of alternatives. However, with Ericom's PowerTerm WebConnect, the marketplace is now very different. Organizations and IT departments have a choice — a cost-efficient, less complex and more attractive alternative.

Visit http://www.ericom.com/citrix_alternative to learn more about the benefits of the alternative to Citrix or to download a free product demo.

About Ericom

Ericom® Software is a leading provider of **Application Access and Virtualization Solutions**. Since 1993, Ericom has been helping users access business-critical applications running on a broad range of Microsoft® Windows® Terminal Servers, Virtual Desktops, Blade PCs, legacy hosts, and other systems. Ericom provides concrete business value by helping organizations realize the benefits of their IT investments. With offices in the United States, United Kingdom, EMEA, India and China, Ericom also has an extensive network of distributors and partners throughout North America, Europe, Asia and the Far East. Our expanding customer base is more than 30 thousand strong, with over 7 million installations.

For more information on Ericom's products and services, contact us at the location nearest to you. And visit our web site: <http://www.ericom.com>

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