

How CLI Products Can Facilitate Legacy Application Modernization

Use of CLI text terminals, terminal emulation software, and thin clients can help facilitate activities associated with legacy application modernization. To fully understand this benefit, it is important to understand what server-based computing is, and what products CLI has to offer.

Server-Based Computing

Server-based computing is sometimes referred to as server-centric, centralized, or application-server computing. In server-based computing, all applications are deployed, supported, and executed (run) at the server, not at the user desktop. All data is stored on the server. All applications are displayed on the desktop device. This desktop device can be a CLI text terminal, a PC running CLI terminal emulation software, or a CLI thin client.

CLI Text Terminals

CLI text terminals are very simple devices that are used to display text (character) information. They are sometimes referred to as “green screens”. CLI text terminals do not “run” applications, but can display any text application running on midrange, mainframe, UNIX, or other types of “legacy” servers. Their use brings many benefits, including true plug-level compatibility, low price and very high security.

CLI Terminal Emulation Software

CLI terminal emulation software, sometimes referred to as host-access software, is a simple program that runs on a PC that makes a PC act like a text terminal. CLI terminal emulation software allows a PC to display any text application running on legacy servers, but the PC can still run local Windows applications and access the Internet. Its use brings many benefits, including access to Windows applications, color display, and access to local media.

CLI Thin Clients

CLI thin clients are simple devices that are used to display text information and graphics. CLI thin clients do not run applications, but can display any application running on legacy servers, Windows or Citrix servers, and the Internet. Applications look the same as the original. CLI thin clients have no fans or other moving parts. Their use brings many benefits, including high security, easy administration, high reliability, long useful life, and low power consumption.

Legacy Application Modernization

The term “application” refers not only to a particular software program, but also to all the hardware, software, services, and other aspects tied to a particular business information system. Over time, companies make large investments in refining and maintaining key business information systems, proven legacy systems that are relied on in order to gain or maintain competitive advantage. Yet over time, these same systems become costly to manage, and actually become obstacles preventing companies from updating business practices and processes, and from taking advantage of newer technologies required to keep pace with the competition. Instead of spending valuable time and resources replacing these systems, companies can use CLI products to modernize, update and renovate applications. By doing this, companies can protect investments in legacy systems, and still implement new capabilities. CLI products can modernize legacy applications in many ways.

CLI Products Can Access and Display A Great Deal Of Information

Many legacy display devices can only run one session, or have low-resolution screens, or can only access one host at a time. CLI products can run multiple sessions, support high screen resolutions, and can access multiple hosts and the Internet simultaneously, improving display presentation and productivity. In addition, this also eliminates the need for multiple desktop devices, increasing valuable desk space.

CLI Products Can Display Text And Graphics

Most older display devices only display text (character) information. CLI products can display both text and graphics simultaneously. This lets companies give a "face-lift" to legacy applications via a new Windows-style Graphical User Interface (GUI). GUIs are also easier to use than older text interfaces, can make applications more flexible, and can provide an improved user experience resulting in greater customer and user satisfaction and stronger business relationships.

CLI Products Are Web Enabled

Many legacy display devices are not web enabled. Many CLI products are web enabled, supporting both local (device-based) and server-based web browsers. This web enablement permits remote application access via products such as WebFacing, WebSphere Host Access Transformation Server (HATS), and iSeries Access for Web 5250, and also enables "automatic" application deployment for all users through the web interface. Web enablement also supports technologies such as Workplace, Domino and Java.

CLI Products Can Display Legacy And Windows Applications

Most older display devices are fixed-function, and can only access legacy applications. CLI products can access not only existing legacy applications, but also the latest Windows applications and the Internet. This makes it easier for companies to integrate legacy applications with other popular and convenient desktop applications, web browsers, etc.

CLI Products Support Monochrome, Color And LCD Monitors

Many legacy display devices only support monochrome CRT monitors. All of CLI's products support not only monochrome CRT monitors, but also color CRT and color LCD monitors. The use of color can communicate information much more quickly than monochrome, improving productivity. LCD monitors take up less desk space, weigh less, consume less energy, and typically offer more viewing area than CRT monitors of the same size. They also reduce eye fatigue and strain, emit less radiation, and resist screen burn-in and magnetic interference.

CLI Products Are Very Reliable

Aging display devices can become unreliable, and are costly or even impossible to repair, and annual maintenance contracts can be a tremendous expense. Many of CLI's products come complete with three-year advanced-replacement warranties. This gives companies brand new, reliable hardware, increasing uptime and useful lifespan, and eliminating costly repairs and maintenance contracts, all at a low acquisition cost.

CLI Products Are Very Durable In Harsh Environments

Many legacy display devices use fans for device cooling. In environments where dust, dirt, and other contaminants are prevalent, fans can suck in such contaminants, causing hardware components to overheat, or moving parts to stick or seize, leading to failure. CLI products have no fans or other moving parts. And some CLI products also come complete with impact-resistant metal enclosures. This all improves uptime, and saves on repair and replacement costs.

CLI Products Are Fast And Easy To Install

Since they include twinax, serial and parallel ports, CLI's products are fully plug-compatible with aging display devices, and can replace these devices seamlessly and quickly. And CLI products also include Ethernet and USB ports, and are compatible with industry-standard PC keyboards, mice and

monitors. This makes installation, deployment and delivery simple, fast and easy, and provides investment protection by allowing the use of existing peripherals, reducing or eliminating the need to scrap or write off existing, functioning peripherals and replace them with new peripherals.

CLI Products Reduce Help Desk Demands

Many legacy display devices are very complex, and when problems occur, they can be difficult to troubleshoot. CLI products are simple, and require less maintenance, since there is far less that can possibly go wrong. If issues do arise, CLI products are faster to troubleshoot. Using shadowing, systems administrators can remotely “view” most CLI products for faster configuration, problem diagnosis, and resolution. And systems administrators can use the included management software to remotely upgrade most CLI products, without needing to visit every desktop.

CLI Products Consume Little Energy

Because they are simpler, have fewer components, and no moving parts, CLI products typically consume one-tenth the energy that PCs or other legacy display devices consume. This lower power consumption not only saves money, it also contributes to increased hardware reliability and is environmentally friendly.

Now Is The Time To Modernize

This paper outlines only a few of the ways in which the use of CLI products can modernize legacy applications. Some others ways include, but are not limited to:

- Better data management
- More comfortable display screen and keyboard orientation
- Greater data and system security and confidentiality
- Reduced noise “pollution”

Companies do not need to implement new business information systems from scratch in order to modernize applications. And companies that want to modernize applications no longer need to sacrifice their legacy platform security, reliability, and stability. Through the use of CLI text terminals, terminal emulation software, and thin clients, companies can extend into the on-demand world the useful life of critical, mature, proven host applications that run organizations, with lower costs, in less time, and with fewer risks than a ground-up approach, maximizing Return-On-Investment (ROI).

For more information, visit the Computer Lab International web site at www.computerlab.com, or send email to info@computerlab.com, or call 1.800.727.5250 in the US, 1.714.572.8000 elsewhere.

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