White Paper

The Total Solution - Visara iCON

Returning to its legacy roots, Visara International (formerly Memorex-Telex) has developed a solution that provides local and remote management for both the AS/400 and iSeries platforms. Using the simple, reliable, and inexpensive Twinax display communications as its foundation, the iCON adds the capabilities of multiple sessions from a single desktop as well as secure remote access. Like the HMC, it also provides session sharing, allowing multiple operators access to a single console session. The iCON-XT provides concentration, serving access to multiple LPARs from a single unit. Unlike the HMC, iCON provides this service to all models of midrange processors and all software revisions.

The iCON device uses the standard twinax console communication to serve the session to both the local display and keyboard, and to remote desktops. The twinax console communication is used for two very important reasons. The first is that the protocol has not changed and is stable, unlike OpsConsole which always has to be updated. And the second reason is that you can access all secure mode functions on the AS/400 or iSeries platforms. These capabilities are accessed by using Visara's proprietary VT-5250 twinax emulation software, which is included with iCON and has no licensing restrictions; you can install it on as many Windows or Linux desktops as you need – even at home.

The iCON comes in two models, each with a distinct role to play in the data center. The single station iCON-1T can be attached directly to a remote host and provide secure remote access to the master consoles session, as well as act as a direct replacement for a local twinax display. The rack mountable iCON-XT server can provide access for up to 20 Midrange Host platforms which can be managed through a single desktop device.

The iCON-1T

The single station iCON-1T, when directly attached to a Midrange host, provides secure remote access while also being a direct replacement for a twinax display. It is complete with a 122-key 5250 keyboard, ready to plug in and go. But it is far from a "dumb" terminal. It also has a 10/100 Ethernet adapter to serve its session to others. This makes the session always available to the data center staff, while allowing simultaneous access to other operators – across the building or across the world. This is a quick and simple answer to Disaster Recovery remote access.

Unlike TN-5250 sharing schemes where each operator keys a command unseen by the others, iCON's Keyboard Arbitration shows every keystroke for all users, so there will be no surprises or duplicate commands entered. Not only can the iCON control its own twinax session, but it can also access the sessions of any other iCON, giving you complete access to all processors and all LPARs from any desktop. Of course, the remote access to the sessions is secured with 168-bit 3DES SSL encryption.

iCON-1T

A simple graphical configuration utility allows you configure the network parameters and all aspects of remote access, including who has access and what they can do. The Users Manual is rarely needed.

Other than the power switch, the iCON-1T has no moving parts, so the typical concerns of hard drives and fans are gone, giving you the reliability of the good old twinax display. Based on a hardened Linux OS, there are no concerns about Microsoft viruses or frequent software updates.

The iCON-XT

The rack mountable iCON-XT is a tier 4 enterprise class appliance. With its triple redundant hot-swappable power supplies and Raid configured hard drives, this appliance can attach directly to 20 Midrange Host systems despite their vintage. With a maximum of five Quad Twinax Adapters (QTAs), this unit can be the replacement for 20 Midrange Master Consoles. It can have an attached monitor and keyboard, or it can be


iCON-XT

placed in a 19" rack and all configuration, management, and sessions handled remotely. Configuration and management is done through a simple and secure web browser interface. Display sessions are handled with VT-5250, whether locally or remotely.

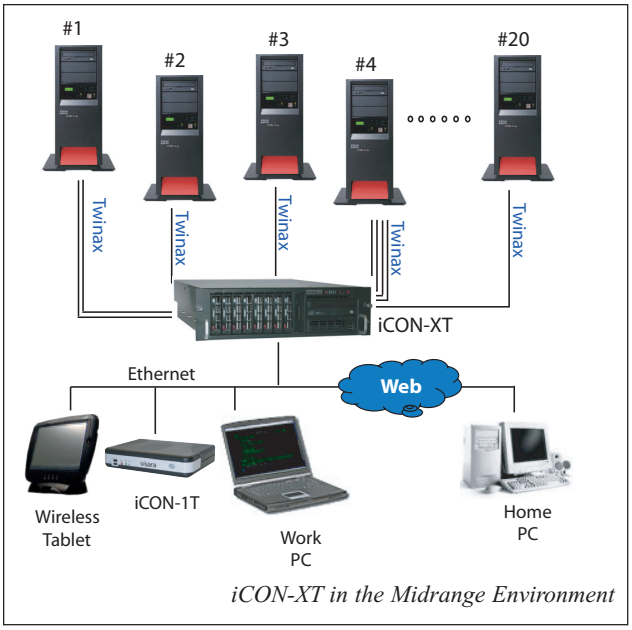
Loaded with the same hardened Linux OS as the single station iCON-1T, the maintenance of this platform is minimal.

Let's review our list and see how iCON scores.

Reliable console operation. Twinax is not susceptible to LAN traffic, so even if the network is down, data center staff can have a direct connection to the processor. Viruses or broadcast storms may disable remote users, but the local machine is always available.

Secure remote console operation. Remote access is encrypted by SSL and authenticated by usernames and passwords, from both the Windows based VT-5250 and from iCON to iCON.

The ability to manage several LPARs or processors from one desktop. Whether from iCON to iCON or from VT-5250, a single desktop can access all iCON sessions, simultaneously sharing the session with other operators. You can leave the session up in the data center, have a session active from your office, and bring up a session when you get home, with no operator intervention required. The utility of this scheme in Disaster Recovery planning is obvious, especially with a "lights out" DR site.



iCON-XT in the Midrange Environment

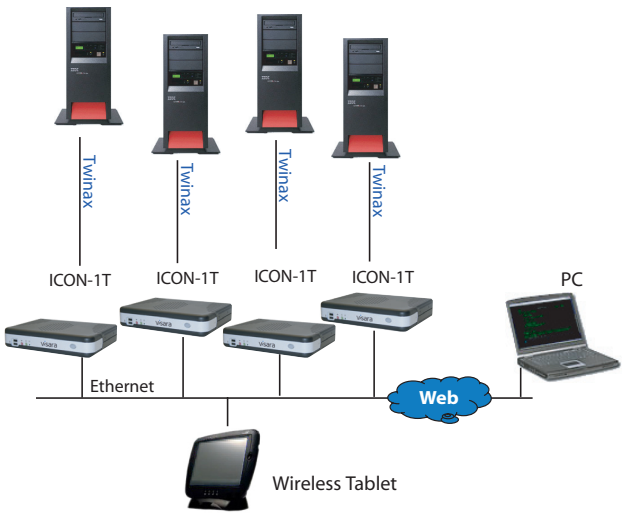
Scalability – the solution can grow with the data center. Whether replacing each Twinax display with an iCON-1T or concentrating Twinax connections with the iCON-XT, the system can grow with you.

Simplicity – the solution must be easy to install, configure, use and maintain. From the processor side, Twinax is the simplest interface to install, configure and maintain. Adding IOPs and IOAs to a midrange processor for LAN connectivity is often far from simple. From the desktop, Twinax has very simple installation, cabling, and configuration. Configuring and using Operations Console and the HMC can range from challenging to exasperating, especially when Windows networking parameters have to be manually changed.

Resilient. With no Windows software in either iCON model, they are not prone to attack from viruses or hackers, and require very little software maintenance. With Twinax connectivity, the console session is available even when the rest of the corporate network is down. With no moving parts in the iCON, and the robust enterprise class hardware in the iCON-XT, hardware maintenance should be minimal.

Recommendation

There is no shortage of alternatives when looking at midrange console management solutions. However many of these options have shortcomings. They also have benefits and if they meet all of your needs, they are viable choices. However, no solution offers the total package found in the Visara iCON line of products. Console consolidation, secure remote management, small foot print, secure environment and substantial cost savings, whether replacing a single Twinax terminal, dozens of them attached to a large KVM, or a PC farm running Ops Console, the Visara iCON offers ***the total solution***.



iCON-1T in the Midrange Environment

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