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Thin-computing Library Solution Request for Information

Deadline

Please submit a response to the e-mail address listed above by the end of business (5:00 P.M. MST) on August 19, 2005.

Background

The Montana State Library wishes to identify and evaluate thin-computer¹ public access solutions for Montana libraries. Typically these are integrated solutions featuring a Linux or Windows server, a collection of library-specific and general office productivity applications, a number of terminal-based workstations, and support.

- We are only interested in evaluating integrated solutions which combine hardware, applications, and support.
- We are not interested in reviewing servers, terminals, applications, and support separately.
- We are solely interested in solutions featuring terminal-based workstations, not dumbed-down personal computer-based workstations

The Flathead County Library and Great Falls Public Library are both experimenting with thin-computers, with marked success, as public access computers.

Intent

After identifying competing solutions it is our intent to evaluate each solution and provide Montana libraries with a written comparative evaluation of identified integrated library thin-computer solutions, including pricing. We *may* elect to issue a request for proposal, based on what we learn from this RFI, for the purposes of establishing a term contract for an integrated library thin-computing public workstation solution.

Written responses to this RFI will be reviewed by the State, including but not limited to the Montana State Library, the MSL Networking Task Force, and the MSL Commission. Responses are open for public inspection under Montana law.

Instructions

- Answer each question; be as brief as possible and as is constructive
- Use the STATE's numbering system to format your answers; you may (but are not required to) attach supplementary materials
- Respond electronically, as an email attachment, in Microsoft Word format

We appreciate your responses to this request. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thin Client RFI Vendor Questions

1. VENDOR / PRODUCT INFORMATION
a. What is your Web site URL?
b. Who should we contact with technical questions? Please provide an email address, as well as telephone number.
c. Who should we contact with general product information questions? Please provide an email address, as well as telephone number.
d. What is (are) your product name(s)?
e. What comes standard with each package?
f. Please describe your product(s) operating system(s), application(s), and hardware platform(s).
g. What are the optional offerings for each package, what do they do, and how much do they cost?
h. How many years have you provided integrated library thin-computer services to libraries?
i. How many libraries use your integrated hardware/software/and support offerings?
j. Please supply contact information for two larger, and an additional two smaller current library users of your application to act as references. (total of four references)
2. LIBRARY MANAGEMENT FEATURES
a. How are patrons authenticated?
b. Is 'guest' access an option?
c. What languages are supported?
d. How is patrons privacy protected?
e. How is printing controlled?
f. How is session-duration (auto time-out, admin control) managed?
g. Describe accessibility options for visually impaired users.
h. Describe centralized administrative control, presumably from the Reference desk
i. Describe firewall and virus protection
j. Is CIPA compliant Internet filtering available? Can it be turned on or off on a per-terminal basis?
k. Does the software support multiple session types, including but not limited to: Browser, Special needs, Desktop, Card Catalog, etc.
l. Is the solution SIP2 Certified by SirsiDynix? By others?
m. Does your thin-computing solution require multiple ports opened for SIP2 capability (if there is no local, networked server for which we can open 1 new SIP2 connection)?
n. Do you require separate public IP addresses for each thin-computer workstation, to enable users to authenticate against the Sirsi system?
o. Is "OPAC Only" access supported?
p. Is printer vending hardware and software available?
3. END-USER APPLICATIONS
a. What desktop productivity software is included or supported?

b. Is Telnet supported?
c. Is Web and AOL e-mail supported?
d. Is Internet browsing supported?
e. Is a USB drive, floppy, or CD-ROM burner available?
f. Is an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) "I agree to..." included for patrons prior to logon? Is this message customizable?
4. SUPPORT
a. Are maintenance, upgrades, and support provided by vendor?
b. Is support provided remotely, or in person? Please describe in detail.
c. Is next-day hardware replacement an option?
d. Is there an optional hardware replacement-cycle option?
5. PRICING
a. What is the retail pricing for 2, 4, 8, 16, and 32 terminal installations? What does this price include?
b. Please describe ongoing costs (maintenance, support, upgrades, etc.)
c. What discount are you offering to Montana libraries?
d. Is this discount available as a credit to preexisting Montana library users, if any, of your products and services?
e. Is installation provided by vendor, and, if so, what is the price?

ⁱ Definition: Thin-computing—In thin-computing, the workstation can be either a personal computer, ‘dumbed-down’ and turned into a terminal by applications and hardware, or a simple computer terminal. For the purposes of this RFI, we are only interested in thin-computer workstations that are terminals.

Applications and data typically reside on host servers. Hosts often serve multiple workstations. Thin-computing workstations typically have no disc or disk drives. Thin-computers are usually connected to their host server via a standard local area network.

Advantages touted for thin computers (over personal computer workstations) include: lower initial and ongoing cost, easier maintenance, far greater security and freedom from viruses, and integrated ‘librarian hands-free’ turn-key public computing. As promising as thin-computer workstations seem for public access workstations, they are not recommended to be used as staff workstations.