

Case Study

Freight Forwarding & Logistics



Compu-Clearing Deploys the ASP Model Worldwide Using PowerTerm® Suite



"PowerTerm is easy to use, intuitive, and self-learning. It's designed so users can begin work without training. That's where PowerTerm beats its competition hands down."

Arnold Garber
CEO Compu-Clearing
Outsourcing Ltd.

Industry

Freight Forwarding & Logistics

Customer

Compu-Clearing Outsourcing Ltd.

Solution

PowerTerm® InterConnect. Upgraded to PowerTerm® WebConnect for global connectivity

Host

IBM iSeries (AS/400)

Server

Windows 2003

Challenge

To find a comprehensive terminal emulation solution and upgrade Compu-Clearing's green screen presentation with a user-friendly GUI. To enable a geographically-dispersed user base to be supported centrally.

The Result

PowerTerm has given Compu-Clearing's customers reliable, fast access to its iSeries applications in an intuitive, easy to use, Windows environment via modem or Web-browser. Their international user base now have a fast system and a quality service.

Benefits

- PowerTerm enables fast, reliable real-time access to information spanning multiple geographic locations
- PowerTerm is scalable and can be installed on 1 or 10,000 desktops
- Uses an attractive, easy-to-use GUI
- No need for any modifications to existing applications



Since its inception in 1983, Compu-Clearing Outsourcing Ltd. have become the leading provider in South Africa of customs clearing services for the air-cargo and freight forwarding industry. Almost 70% of all customs-clearing companies in South Africa outsource their freight forwarding to Compu-Clearing, and approximately 3,000 customers around the world use Compu-Clearing's systems on a daily basis for the preparation of Air Waybills and labels, Customs Documentation and Customs E.D.I. (electronic data interchange) messages.

With a stock market listing on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and dominance in the home market, Compu-Clearing looked to expand its operation overseas, most recently into the United States.

Modernising the Old 'Look & Feel'

Arnold Garber, CEO of Compu-Clearing, recognized that the specialized systems underpinning the company's success had to be updated to deliver an improved service to customers old and new. "Our core application runs on an IBM iSeries (AS/400). For more than 20 years it was accessed by users in a very reliable, but not very attractive, green screen mode. Whilst the functionality was fine, we agreed with our customers that we should bring the green screen interface into line with modern standards, like the Windows® look and feel."

After a comprehensive review and evaluation of the options, Compu-Clearing's technical department recommended Ericom's PowerTerm solution as technically superior to the alternatives. One of the main benefits was that the PowerTerm product did not impact on their main application software. "The other products we assessed could do the job, but would have required us to make modifications to our core application. That was definitely an unnecessary business risk. What we liked about PowerTerm is that works on the front end, so no changes were needed. We were also impressed with PowerTerm's 'PowerGUI' feature, which could automatically transform our green screens into a mouse-driven GUI without any intervention on our part," comments Garber.

A Partner Who Speaks Their Language

Beyond the technical assessment, the CEO had another, business-driven imperative. "If this project failed or was badly implemented, it could negatively impact on our customers' perception of the Compu-Clearing solution. So I had to be sure that we could work closely with the solution provider to ensure a successful outcome." He discovered that Ericom were more than prepared to ensure the relationship worked at all levels. "It was refreshing to tie up with another solution provider who spoke our language and understood our concerns. From day one Ericom has delivered a solid product with a high level of service and support wrapped around it."

The decision was taken to make PowerTerm the strategic choice for terminal emulation and host access.

Initially Compu-Clearing implemented PowerTerm InterConnect (Windows Edition), for optimum terminal emulation for its South African customers. With its small footprint, PowerTerm InterConnect is easily installable onto any PC. Compu-Clearing's customers connected via modem to access the host and obtain the information and data they required.

Enabling Access via the Internet

With the company's global expansion, Compu-Clearing has recently implemented Ericom's PowerTerm WebConnect to enable customers to access via the Internet. PowerTerm WebConnect provides a server-based, thin client computing model, utilising a company's existing desktop infrastructure and saving tens of thousands of dollars on replacement hardware and ongoing management. Garber explains: "WebConnect was clearly the right way to go, for us and for our customers. It is a server based solution which can be configured and

deployed in one day across our entire customer base. So our IT department now has complete control of every aspect of security, connections, deployment, usage and on-going management. That's proved a real benefit in a large scale, geographically diverse operation like ours."

The deployment proved particularly satisfactory. "PowerTerm and the PowerGUI-created interface proved easy to use, intuitive, and self-learning. Our customers began work without formal training. That's where PowerTerm beats its competition hands down. Most of our users are not even aware that they are using a terminal emulation product. It was business as usual - but with the Compu-Clearing service in their Windows environment," adds Garber.

Confidence to Expand the Business

PowerTerm is delivering further benefits as Compu-Clearing extend their business through the ASP model, providing a complete outsourcing services led solution to international markets. Garber explains, "PowerTerm's speed and performance contributed to our ability to expand our business outside of South Africa. The server is situated here in South Africa and our customers are located in all corners of the world. The customers key data into their systems and press the enter button; it comes all the way to South Africa to get processed and it goes back to the customer. The whole process is incredibly quick. That fast response is also very important when we demonstrate our service to prospects around the world - without it, we'd struggle to break into the new markets. The confidence we have in using PowerTerm to deliver our solution in multiple ways to our customers has really opened up our strategic options for the business."

The final 'tick in the box' for Garber is support. "It was important to Compu-Clearing that on-going support and service were there when our customers needed it. Ericom delivers 'follow the sun' support services out of UK, Israel and US offices so they were able to provide us support on our terms, during our business hours, which was ideal."

Garber summarises, "We found PowerTerm to be very reliable. We never have any software problems with PowerTerm and very seldom have to ask for any assistance. Ericom's support is excellent and there's never been a problem. To me, when the combined solution delivers more value than the parts - that's a partnership."

Compu-Clearing is one of over 200 businesses in South Africa using PowerTerm products to enable access to their core business applications.

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