Remote control, screen sharing, and terminal service in Linux

ACCESS AND CONTROL

You can optimize your network by letting your systems share screen images, CPU cycles, and even mouse clicks. This month we look at remote control and terminal service technologies. **BY JOE CASAD**

Control has always been easy with Unix-based systems like Linux. In the old days, simple tools let the user open a remote connection for command-line access. The rise of the graphic interface brought new complication to this simple formula.

In recent years, the economies of thin-client alternatives have added emphasis to the long-neglected terminal service model, and virtualization has focused renewed attention on the task of reaching other systems from a single keyboard and mouse.

This month's cover story examines some tools and techniques for remote control, screen sharing, and terminal service. We start with a look at the VNC (Virtual Network Computing) remote access protocol. We'll show you how VNC differs from the X Window system, describe some tips for working with VNC, and review some popular no-cost VNC applications, such as TightVNC, RealVNC, MetaVNC, and UltraVNC.

The next article in this month's cover story takes a close look at NoMachine's NX technology – an innovative protocol for cross-platform terminal connections. NX offers fast performance even over slow networks. We'll show you how NX works, and we'll examine a pair of free

NX tools: NoMachine's Free edition and the community-based FreeNX project.

The next article describes Rdesktop, an open source tool for accessing Windows Terminal services using the RDP protocol. You'll learn why you don't really need a Windows client to interact with a Windows terminal server.

The final article in this month's special collection looks at the Linux Terminal Server Project (LTSP) and describes how to set up your Linux system as a terminal server.

Today's remote access applications offer economy and convenience; and, like almost everything else in open source, the tools you'll need are mostly available for free.

If you administer remote systems on a heterogeneous network, if you are looking for new thin client techniques, or even if you just need to access your office computer on a business trip, read on for more about remote control, screen sharing, and terminal service. We hope you enjoy this month's cover story. ■