CASE STUDY

IN BRIEF

The Customer:

American Title Group is the largest title insurance company in the state of Texas, servicing well over 100 customer branches.

The Challenge:

The company planned to upgrade its current network, within the limits of its budget, by gradually replacing green screens with NCs and PCs.

The Solution:

The American Title Group replaced its IBM 5394 Controllers with Perle 594e Network Controllers.

The Benefits:

Perle's 594e is a flexible solution, offering integrated IP routing and NC Proxy Boot Server support that allowed American Title to meet both present and future business objectives.

PERLE

The Value of Experience

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Controlled Migration to IP Desktops and Thin Client

Perle's 594e Network Controller Offers Flexibility Within Budget

THE CUSTOMER:

American Title Group is the largest title insurance company in the state of Texas, providing search services to homeowners and mortgage companies via its national network. American Title has a complex communications network with connections to its parent company and over 100 customer service branches throughout the state of Texas.

THE CHALLENGE:

Replacing Green Screens

American Title's WAN was based on workstation controllers, connected via leased analog lines to a central AS/400. With the lease on IBM controllers set to expire, Dwight Marriott, Vice President of MIS, needed to review his hardware installation. "With well over 1,400 green screen terminals installed, we had a large investment in existing equipment. If we had to replace all the green screens at once just to upgrade our network, it would have been tremendously costly. What we needed was a solution that would allow us to keep the green screens in service while we initiated a controlled migration to intelligent workstations and began to use other more current technology, such as Frame Relay," explained Marriott.

A Flexible Solution

Marriott continued, "My main objective was to cut long-term maintenance costs by gradually replacing the majority of our remote Twinax terminals with NCs. I planned to deploy network stations primarily, and use PCs only where it was absolutely necessary. However, in some of our offices we would need PCs. In others, Twinax devices would have to be retained."

THE SOLUTION:

The Perle 594e Network Controller

Marriott turned to Perle Systems for help. He was already impressed with Perle's 394 controllers, which were running in conjunction with IBM 5394s across his network and was extremely pleased to find out that Perle's 594e Network Controller offered all the flexibility he needed.

Flexibility To Support Multiple Objectives

An all-in-one solution, the Perle 594e would allow Marriott the flexibility to move forward in a number of different ways, depending upon American Title's business objectives for each remote site. He would have the capability to support Twinax devices, while also routing IP data from PCs and NCs located on the remote office LAN – without the need for additional FRADs or routers. In addition, using the Perle 594e's IP Host Connect feature, he would have the ability to send SNA data from Twinax-based devices across the WAN in native IP format. Host Connect would allow him to maintain a single protocol across the WAN. According to Marriott, "The Perle 594e allowed me to create a remote access environment that was dynamic enough to support both our present and future business objectives."

Performance Saves Money

The scalability of the Perle 594e also offered the potential for additional cost-savings. "The Perle 594e could handle up to 160 IP connections, but the IBM devices could only support 80. Going with Perle would allow us to get by with fewer controllers, saving $15-20,000 U.S. in the initial installation, with the potential to increase the savings dramatically when and if we chose to implement the devices company-wide," explained Marriott.

Facilitating Network Computer Deployment

For American Title, perhaps the most important benefit of the Perle 594e was the Enhanced Networking Feature, which gave Marriott both integrated routing and NC Proxy Boot Server capability at remote sites. This would allow him to deploy remote NCs without encountering the typical problems involved in booting NCs across a WAN. It also allowed him to avoid the cost and maintenance headaches caused by installing NT-based Boot Servers at each remote site.

Easy Installation

"It wasn't hard at all. We were able to do it in-house, inside of a week. We went through all of the devices, figured out how they worked and how best to incorporate them within our system. We were able to get all of the devices configured and running properly by our deadline without a hitch, so we were all very happy with the rollout."

Future Developments

Marriott and his team are very pleased with their choice. They needed little assistance from Perle in deploying the new equipment and have found operating the Perle 594e Network Controllers to be very straightforward. They look forward to the increased performance they will gain once they have completed the changeover to Frame Relay in all locations.