



Microsoft Open Protocols decrease solution deployment time!

Overview

Customer: Aqua Connect
Web Site: www.aquaconnect.net
Country or Region: USA
Industry: Terminal Services

Customer Profile:

Aqua Connect is a leading provider of Mac terminal servers.

For more information about other Microsoft customer successes, please visit:

www.microsoft.com/protocols

"In our experience, Microsoft has been responsive, eager and forthcoming regarding the use of its intellectual property and technologies. In particular, the Microsoft Open Protocols team has made licensing and implementing the RDP protocol for use in our product a breeze."

—Joseph Cohen, Chief Technical Officer

The Company

Aqua Connect is a leading provider of Macintosh® terminal server software. Aqua Connect Terminal Server (ACTS) delivers the Mac OS X platform and experience to mobile devices and diverse hardware and software platforms, including older Macintosh systems and thin client devices.

The majority of Aqua Connect customers are in the fields of education, government and enterprise, and are looking to integrate and/or centralize Macs into their computer environments.

The Business Problem

Terminal services have been evolving over the last few years and so have the expectations of customers. Developing a new protocol is both expensive and time consuming and doesn't always lead to a complete implementation.

Aqua Connect's goal was to use a widely adopted protocol that had been implemented by various industries. They also wanted to be able to implement terminal services without drastically changing the environment or experience for the end user in order to increase the rate of successful adoption of the technology. Aqua Connect needed to manage the implementation themselves, but also have the blueprint of the protocol. Using the Microsoft Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP), they were able to provide an interoperable and seamless customer experience.

The Product

Once Aqua Connect Terminal Server (ACTS) is installed on an adequately configured Mac OS X server, users on networked computers and mobile devices can:

- Log onto the Mac OS X server as if connected directly to the server's console
- Work with a full-featured Mac OS X desktop
- Run Mac OS X-based applications installed on the server

“The Open Protocols team’s efforts went beyond what would be expected from any other company that wishes for product interoperability and compatibility.”

—Joseph Cohen,
Chief Technical Officer

Users of ACTS share the resources of a common server, allowing:

- Simplified installation, configuration and maintenance of programs
- Central administration of user environments and security
- Stable and uniform desktop platform for applications
- Minimized IT department workloads
- Simultaneous resource sharing and usage

The Solution

As part of its development of a Mac terminal server, Aqua Connect needed to integrate a widely adopted and recognized protocol. With the RDP protocol, Aqua Connect was able to offer its customers additional features and greater functionality. Aqua Connect obtained a license from Microsoft for the RDP and, by accessing Microsoft’s protocol specifications, Aqua Connect reduced their development time without sacrificing compatibility with RDP devices currently available.

Microsoft Protocol

Implementation Details

Because the architecture for Aqua Connect allows it to be protocol agnostic, a protocol interface was created to implement the RDP. This interface is included in the 3.0 version of the product and will be installed by default with ACTS for all users. Aqua Connect’s software design allows for further extensibility and interoperability with other platforms by adding new protocols that allow more clients to connect to their Mac server.

Results

Aqua Connect has experienced tremendous acceptance and growth within all industries

and particularly in schools, government agencies and enterprises. These customers have found ACTS to play an important part in their IT infrastructures, with adopters finding ACTS a beneficial way to allow organizations to have a real Mac terminal server environment.

Value to the Business

Customers want to enable both Mac and Windows clients to use the Aqua Connect Terminal Server to run Mac applications. To do this, obtaining a license for the RDP through the Microsoft Communications Protocol Program (MCP) was an ideal solution.

RDP is a widely accepted protocol and companies want to deploy it for all of the benefits it provides, such as encryption. Having ACTS with RDP allows users to deploy terminal services widely in much larger increments than previously possible.

The collaboration with Microsoft and the inclusion of RDP has helped Aqua Connect keep pace with customer demand and establish ACTS as a leader in the market.

Level of Satisfaction with

Microsoft Open Protocols Support team

The interactions with Microsoft employees in MCP and related product groups have been very positive, including:

- Rapid responses to inquiries posed by Aqua Connect’s development team regarding technical protocol documentation and updates done to these documents.
- Microsoft’s genuine passion for interoperability and compatibility.