



Computer

For Providers of Technology and Information Solutions

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# ResellerNews

## CRN TEST CENTER

Product Review & Channel-Support Programs



EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Network Station 1000

Price: \$999  
IBM Corp.  
Somers, N.Y.  
(800) 426-7272  
www.ibm.com



The CRN Test Center divides its Editors' Choice award into two categories for thin clients. IBM notches in network computers for the Network Station 1000. Tektronix gets the nod for its ThinStream 200CE, a Windows-based terminal.

IBM's Network Station 1000 is at the top of IBM's line of network computers designed for the enterprise and is indifferent to the server platform. This elegant solution performed flawlessly in lab tests, and

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### Network Station 1000

Price: \$999  
Warranty: 1 year  
Distributors/Integrators: CompuCom, Gates/Arrow, GE Capital, Hall-Mark, Inacom, Ingram Micro, MicroAge, Pioneer-Standard, Tech Data, Vanstar  
Authorization Requirements: None  
Model Number: 1000

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THERE ARE FEW companies still around that have sold more big iron than IBM Corp. And even fewer have more to lose if mainframes go the way of Wang. The Test Center could think of none better than IBM to bridge the gap between yesterday's obsolete display terminals and today's network-centric office productivity workstations.

Enter the Network Station 1000, the crown jewel of IBM's line of network computers aimed at giving enterprise professionals direct access to all of a company's resources, regardless of the type of machine on which they reside.

Engineers were impressed not only with its extensive functionality and top-notch performance, but with its accompanying easy-to-use

browser-based administrative tools, which can be installed on any Web server, enabling network management on virtually any server operating system.

When a network computer boots, it usually must be told from where to download the operating system, applications and user profiles, all of which can be on the same or different servers. The Network Station allows as many as three boot-host IP addresses and tries to boot from each in order. If a user's first-listed server is not present, the Network Station simply boots from the next server on the list. The user never knows the difference. This feature permits administra-

#### Highlights:

- ▶ Fast RISC-based processor and video outperform all others.
- ▶ Web-based admin tools cross platforms, networks, servers.
- ▶ Smart Card reader opens doors to VAR-customized apps.

### Technology And Feature Summary

★ EXCEPTIONAL  
● ABOVE AVERAGE  
◐ ACCEPTABLE  
○ NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

	PERFORMANCE	PROTOCOL SUPPORT	EXPANDABILITY	OS FLEXIBILITY	CENTRAL MANAGEMENT	CHANNEL PROGRAM	OVERALL
Boundless	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●	●
IBM	★	★	●	★	★	★	★
NCD	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	●
Neoware	○	◐	●	◐	●	◐	◐
Netier	★	★	★	★	●	●	●
Tektronix (WBT)	●	★	★	●	★	●	●
Tektronix (NC)	◐	★	●	★	★	●	●
Wyse	○	●	●	●	●	◐	●

CHANNEL-PROGRAM ANALYSIS CONSTITUTES 50% OF EDITORS' CHOICE SCORE.

tors who set up mirrored servers to seamlessly remove one from service for maintenance with no interruption of service or fail-over protection.

The operating-system download process has many features, one of which is roaming. Since user preferences are stored centrally, these features are ubiquitous. For example, users traveling to a different office can log onto any Network Station and download all of their personal desktop settings and application icons as if back home. If available, the operating system and applications can be loaded from a server local to the remote office, with only the user's preferences traveling across the WAN connection. This speeds up the boot process while conserving WAN bandwidth.

The Network Station offers scores of emulation protocols (including all of IBM's), and the device's X-Windows-like operating system can display dozens of simultaneous windows, any of which can offer access to a host system, Windows NT Server or Web site. Cross-platform file access is through network file system (NFS).

With emulation running locally, performance of host applications is quite snappy. A version of Netscape Navigator compliant

with Java Virtual Machine (JVM) 1.12 is available and runs natively on the Network Station. The version tested was a bit sluggish over the 33.6 dial-up line and did not support Navigator plug-ins. Engineers preferred the experience

**NETWORK STATION 1000** *Rear-mounted ports include 100BaseT Ethernet and PC Card Type III slot. Other ports can be shared across network. Front panel holds 16-bit audio and PS/2 ports.*



when browsing through a Citrix Independent Computing Architecture (ICA) connection established for performance testing.

To measure performance of the Network



Station, Test Center engineers established an ICA connection with the test server and set the video parameters according to the established methodology. The ICA window was set to full screen, and benchmarks were executed. The 200MHz RISC-based Network Station 1000 delivered results on a par with a Pentium II 333MHz desktop computer set up for comparison.

The base Network Station 1000 is equipped with 32 Mbytes of RAM. The tested unit was expanded to its maximum of 64 Mbytes. The unit includes serial and parallel ports, both of which can be shared or used locally. Also on the rear are an RJ-45 port for 10/100 (Token Ring 4/16 also available) and a single Type II or III PC Card slot, which is bootable. The front panel is home to keyboard and mouse ports, plus the microphone and speaker jacks for its 16-bit audio. Also on the front is a Smart Card slot. Maximum video resolution is 1,600 x 1,200 pixels in 256-color mode.

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its remote-administration capabilities are truly a thing of beauty.

Taking the prize in the Windows-based terminal (WBT) category was the Tektronix ThinStream 200CE. Although the device did not finish at the top of the performance charts, the ThinStream 200CE and the company behind it are strong allies in a reseller's fight for market and mind share.

With the Network Station series, IBM takes legacy access to a new level with the ability to natively run concurrent terminal

emulation sessions of dozens of protocols. Bringing all this under one umbrella is a local X-window-like operating system that loads into RAM at boot-up from any style server. This means peaceful coexistence with Windows-based terminals and Windows NT desktop clients. With its Java Virtual Machine, the IBM appliance also opens doors to native Java applications.

Wisely, IBM includes Lotus eSuite. Laboriously slow to execute initially, once running, it performs as if it were running on any desktop PC, providing everything

an office worker needs to be productive.

IBM clearly offers the savviest channel marketing in its worldwide campaign with large VARs and midrange resellers that have hooks into companies that can best deploy thin clients. With a wide range of models and price points—all very competitive with inexpensive desktops—IBM devices are suitable for just about any enterprise. Adding Lotus eSuite in certain network computer configurations only strengthens the sell proposition.