What is a Graphics Terminal Server, and how could it benefit my organisation?

The use of highly graphical applications like CAD or photoshop is becoming more prevalent in all sizes of businesses, but these applications can pose some unique computing challenges. The Logical Solutions Graphical Terminal server can help with these issues and make management simplistic.

For many years we have all been promised the panacea of "cloud computing" and how we are going to be able to connect and have all our problems solved. The reality of this has been found to be somewhat different by most, and our solution looks to work through many of these issues.

Many "old school" technology service providers do not understand or do not want to understand how to migrate their customers to cloud-based services. One of the issues we have seen is that many cloud providers are able to solve a specific part of the problem rather than taking a holistic view of the customer's environment.

Our solutions are often built using multiple providers behind the scenes and are presented to the customer as a single solution. The customer has a single point of contact, irrespective of any service challenge.

What is a Terminal Server?
An excellent way to think of a Terminal server is like an old-style main-frame technology built with modern-day hardware. The terminal server takes the place of the main-frame and is where all the computing work is done. The workstations are connected to the terminal server and are reasonably dumb. These are often referred to as thin clients or dumb terminals, and because the processing all happens on the server, the workstation processing capabilities are ignored, meaning you could have your lowest power computer working with the most taxing computer tasks.

Terminal servers have been around for many years and have been the domain of "process business workers". A process worker carries out a simple process and does not deviate far from that simple process.

Because the terminal server has been designed specifically for the "process worker" in mind, running graphical applications, such as CAD and drawing programs, has not been an option.

How does a Graphical Terminal server differ from a standard Terminal server?
When building a Graphical Terminal Server, special consideration needs to be made for high-end graphics and fast disk access. This is achieved by using specialised enterprise server hardware to accommodate these services.

How do we access the Graphical Terminal Server?
Like most modern cloud-based applications, the graphical terminal servers are available via the internet. We don't require VPNs as our standard client uses secure web-based protocols (as used in the banking industry) and is quickly and easily installed.

How much does a Graphical Terminal Server Cost?
There are two parts to this, firstly the ongoing monthly cost. The graphical terminal servers are sold in blocks of ten concurrent users. If more than ten concurrent users are required. The second part is the upfront installation, and this depends on the work required to install your required applications and get them working.

What are the identified issues that we are trying to solve?

We have found that customers running highly graphical applications are looking for a solution to one of, if not all, the following problems.

- **Hardware capable** of running graphical applications can be expensive to purchase.
  - When using a graphical terminal server, end user hardware is mainly irrelevant.

- Graphical applications often require **moving large drawing and image files around** the network, and if your users are working remotely, moving these files to and from the corporate network is slow and difficult.
  - Because of the graphical terminal server environment, files can remain within the server environment, so moving the files is no longer required.

- Many graphical applications require **complex Installation and licensing**.
  - The applications are installed on the server rather than on individual devices. Thus, managing and maintaining them upfront and longer-term becomes easy for all users.

- **Security is a significant consideration** in our computing environments today. VPNs allow a remote computer to create a "tunnel" to your corporate network. By creating a tunnel from a remote network to your corporate network, you expose your corporate network to additional security flaws.
  - Because the graphical terminal server does not require a VPN, no tunnel is formed to your corporate network. This means that even if your employees use hardware not owned by the corporate, your environment remains safe.

- While CAD is an essential part of our business, what about our **other applications**?
  - Because at the heart of the configuration, we are using a terminal server environment, we can install and configure software for your instance as required.

- If we move to the cloud, **who owns and is our data** being held locally?
  - We understand the importance of data sovereignty. All data remains within New Zealand and is replicated within our Datacentres. All backup and data management are handled as part of your agreement. All data is owned by you, the customer.

- How do you keep **my data safe** – customer to customer?
  - Our customers are isolated from each other. There are NO shared servers or data stores. Within our environment, we create a new customer network for each customer. This means multiple servers can be added to a customer's network and remain secure for that customer.

How can we test to see if a Graphical Terminal Server works for us?

In many cases, we have other customers using the same software that you are, but where this is not the case, we are happy to commit time based on an intention to purchase the service should testing be successful. This type of commitment is known as a "proof of concept" We have found in most cases working with customers and suppliers of software, we have found very few applications that we can't make work.