NC Tip #1: Flexible Booting Process

There are two different methods used to boot a thin client. The first is from local flash memory and the second is from a boot host on the network. This NC tip will explain the advantages and disadvantages of each boot method. The good news is that the NC900 supports both methods. Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of each method will assist you in recommending the appropriate method to your customers.

Booting from Flash Memory

The NC900 offer either an optional 8MB or a 16MB flash memory card. Using one of these flash memory cards will allow the NC900 to boot itself without a boot server.

Flash Memory Advantages
Booting the NC900 from flash memory:
1. requires less time to boot (approximately 15 seconds, not counting starting local clients).
2. requires less network bandwidth.
3. provides a boot method when a boot server is not available, such as at a remote location.

Flash Memory Disadvantages
1. The flash memory card costs extra.
2. The flash memory card may eventually have to be reflashed with newer NCBridge software. Reflashing a flash card is not difficult, but it is more involved than updating the software on a boot server.

Network Booting

The NC900 may boot from a boot server that resides on the network using TFTP, NFS or MOP protocols. Note that NCBridge software would have to be installed on the boot server.

Network Booting Advantages
1. Upgrading all NC900 products on the network to a newer version of NCBridge software is extremely easy by simply loading the new NCBridge software on the boot server and rebooting each NC.
2. There is no extra cost for flash memory.

Network Booting Disadvantages
1. Booting the NC900 from a boot server requires a little extra time (approximately 40 seconds depending on the network).
2. Some type of boot server; such as NT, UNIX, Linux or VAX VMS is required.

Summary

Different users prefer different methods for booting their thin clients. The good news is that the NC900 offers both methods for booting.