Linux Based Console Server

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This document describes how to install, configure, and maintain a Console Serverbased around a PC running linux, a multi-port serial card and the *conserver* (http://www.conserver.com) package.

1. Overview

The department maintains a large number of Linux and Solaris servers, we configure them to allow console access via a serial port partly because of space issues and partly because this makes them much easier to maintain remotely. This means that we need to have a system which supports a large number of serial connections. As we are spread over a number of locations we also need a system which can deal with this transparently.

2. Requirements

- Able to support a large number (~50) of serial connections.
- Flexible enough to provide 2, 4 or 8 port connections in remote locations.
- Provide a secure (SSH,SSL or kerberos) connection from the users PC to the serial console.

- Provide transparent access to all consoles (user only has to do **command** `hostname` in order to be connected).
- Prevent spurious **BREAK** commands being sent to the serial console (this will cause the equivalent of a STOP(L1)-a on solaris).
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3. Hardware

Whilst there are a number of hardware only or software/hardware terminal server options such as the lighwave 3200 (http://www.lightwavecom.com/reviews/3200_product_review.pdf) or the cisco 3600 series (http://www.cisco.com/warp/public/cc/pd/rt/3600/index.shtml) these tend to be expensive and in some cases provide far more ports than we would actually use in a given location.

In terms of the hardware the most flexible solution (and the cheapest) is to use redundant PC's with multiple port serial cards.

3.1. Cyclades Cards

Websites

- Main US website (http://www.cyclades.com).
- UK website (http://www.cyclades.co.uk)

UK Sales information

<sales@mptdata.co.uk>
01724 280814
01724 858427