

Product Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the communication server platforms. You will find the following information in this chapter:

- Introduction to communication servers
- Supported protocols
- Supported interfaces and connections
- Supported platforms
- Configuration overview

Introduction

Communication servers connect terminals, modems, microcomputers, and networks over serial lines to local-area networks (LANs) or wide-area networks (WANs). They provide network access to terminals, printers, workstations, and other networks. Remote configuration is also available through Telnet and Digital Equipment Corporation's Maintenance Operation Protocol (MOP) connections to virtual ports on communication servers.

Four Services

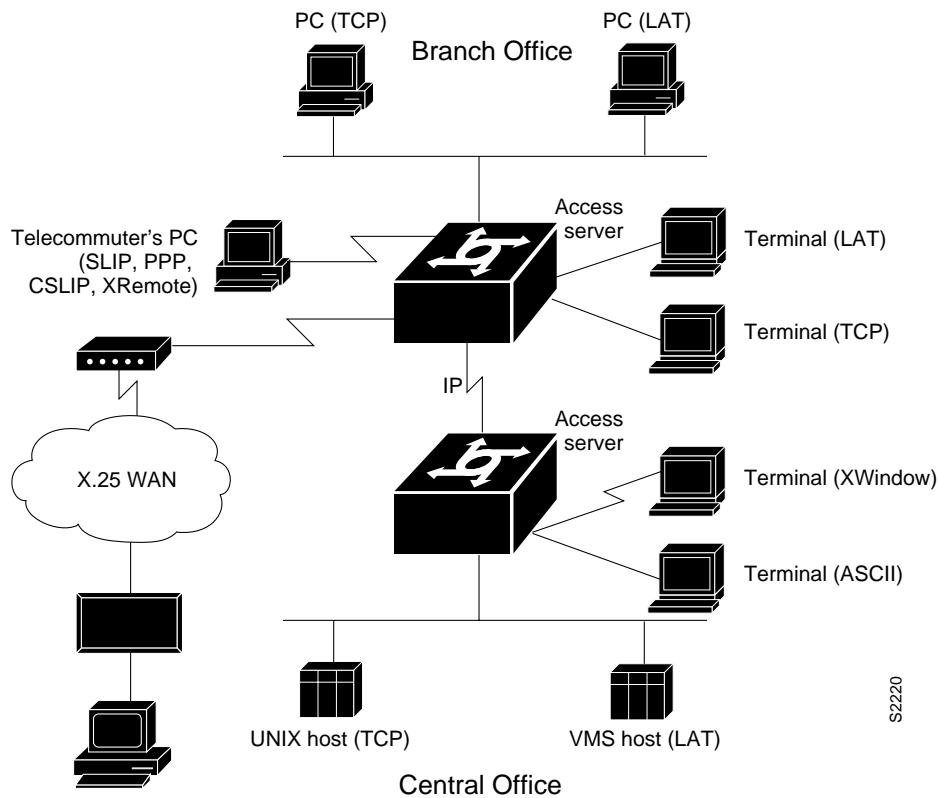
Your communication server supports four types of server operation:

- Terminal services—Connecting asynchronous devices to a LAN or WAN through network and terminal-emulation software including Telnet, rlogin, IBM TN3270, and Digital's Local Area Transport (LAT) protocol. See Figure 1-2.
- Telecommuting services—Connecting devices over a telephone network using XRemote (NCD's X windows terminal protocol), Serial Line Internet Protocol (SLIP), and Point-to-Point Protocol (PPP). See Figure 1-3 and Figure 1-4.
- Routing services—Full-featured IP and Novell IPX routing. This is the same routing functionality found on router platforms. See Figure 1-6.
- Protocol translation services—Converting one virtual terminal protocol into another protocol. See Figure 1-5.

Figure 1-1 illustrates these four types of server functionality available on the communication server: terminal service is shown between the terminals and hosts running the same protocol (LAT-to-LAT or TCP-to-TCP); telecommuting service is demonstrated by the remote PC connection running SLIP,

PPP, or XRemote; protocol translation service supported between the terminals and hosts running unlike protocols (LAT-to-TCP or TCP-to-LAT); asynchronous IP routing is shown by the PC running SLIP or PPP, and between the two communication servers.

Figure 1-1 Functions of the Communication Server



LANs and WANs

On LANs, terminal services support TCP/IP on UNIX machines with Telnet and rlogin connections, IBM machines with TN3270 connections, and Digital machines with LAT connections. You can use the communication server's protocol translation services to make connections between hosts and resources running different protocols including communication server connections to X.25 machines using X.25 PAD.

Telecommuting services support WAN connectivity with XRemote, SLIP, PPP. Other WAN services include dial-on-demand routing (DDR) of IP and IPX, X.25, SMDS, and Frame Relay. Full IP and Novell IPX routing services are also supported. Communication servers are network-compatible with routers, which you can use to extend your network to any size you need.

Security Features

Full network access control features help to ensure system security and efficiency. Security features provide restrictions to resources on the network. The network manager can specify access lists to permit and deny users access to internetworked computers. A username and password-pair authentication scheme is also supported.

Terminal Services

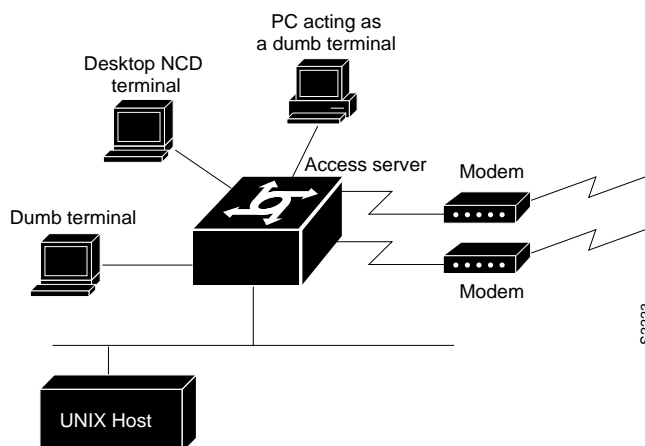
Communication servers provide terminal-to-host connectivity using virtual terminal protocols including Telnet, LAT, TN3270, rlogin, and X.25 PAD (X.25 PAD connections can be made with the ASM-CS only). Modems can be configured for rotary connections, allowing users to connect to the next available modem.

A host can also connect directly to a communication server. In IBM environments, TN3270 allows a standard ASCII terminal to emulate a 3278 terminal and access an IBM host across an IP network.

In Digital environments, LAT support provides a terminal with connections to VMS hosts. X.25 PAD allows terminals to connect directly to an X.25 host over an X.25 network through the communication server. X.25 PAD eliminates the need for a separate PAD device. This connection requires a synchronous serial interface.

Figure 1-2 illustrates terminal-to-host connections using a communication server.

Figure 1-2 Terminal-to-Host Connectivity



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Telecommuting

Using SLIP or PPP, PC users can run TCP/IP applications and services including Telnet, SMTP, and FTP over serial lines. The user gets remote connectivity with the same functionality as a PC attached to a local network. Another telecommuting option is to use the XRemote protocol over asynchronous lines. The communication server provides network functionality to remote X display terminals.

Figure 1-3 illustrates an XRemote connection using a communication server. See the “Configuring XRemote” chapter in the *Communication Server Configuration Guide* for additional possible XRemote configurations.

Figure 1-3 XRemote Connection

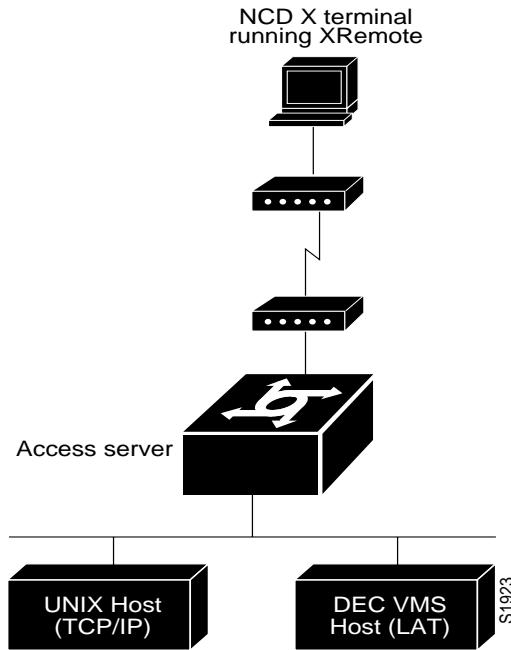
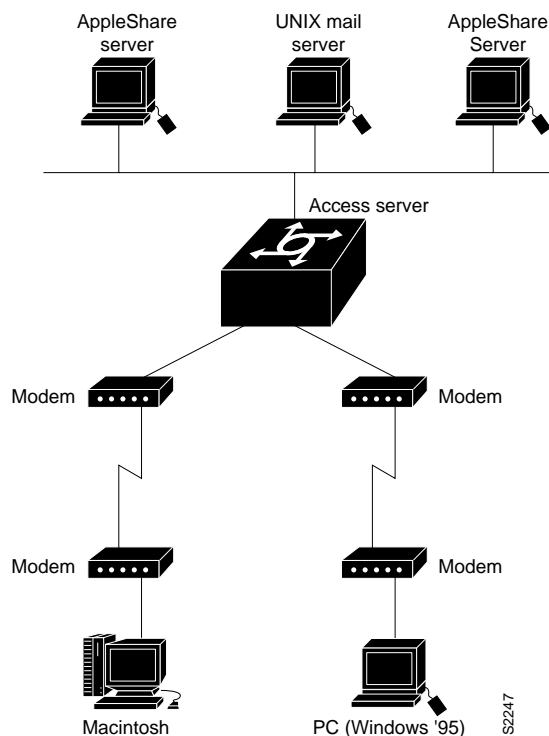


Figure 1-4 shows a generic telecommuting connection.

Figure 1-4 Telecommuting Connection



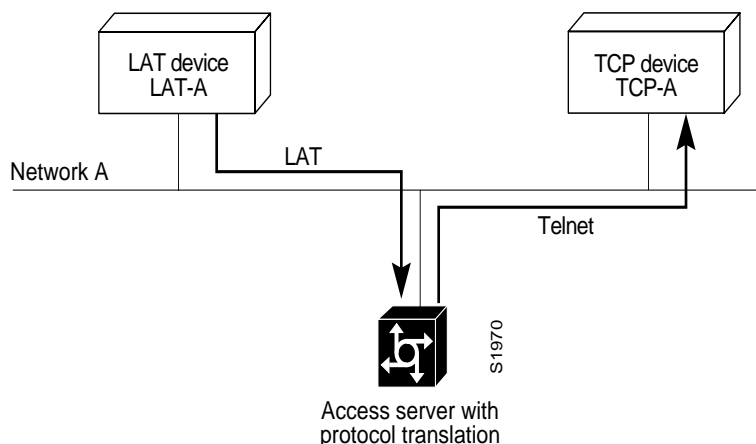
Protocol Translation

Communication servers translate virtual terminal protocols to allow communication between devices running different protocols. Protocol translation supports Telnet (TCP), LAT, and X.25. One-step protocol translation software performs bidirectional translation between any of the following protocols:

- X.25 and TCP (on the ASM-CS)
- X.25 and LAT (on the ASM-CS)
- LAT and TCP

Figure 1-5 illustrates LAT-to-TCP protocol translation.

Figure 1-5 LAT-to-TCP Protocol Translation



Connecting to IBM hosts from LAT, Telnet, rlogin, and X.25 PAD environments is accomplished with two-step translations. In other words, users must first establish a connection with the communication server, then use the TN3270 facility to make a connection to the IBM host.

Remote Access Routing

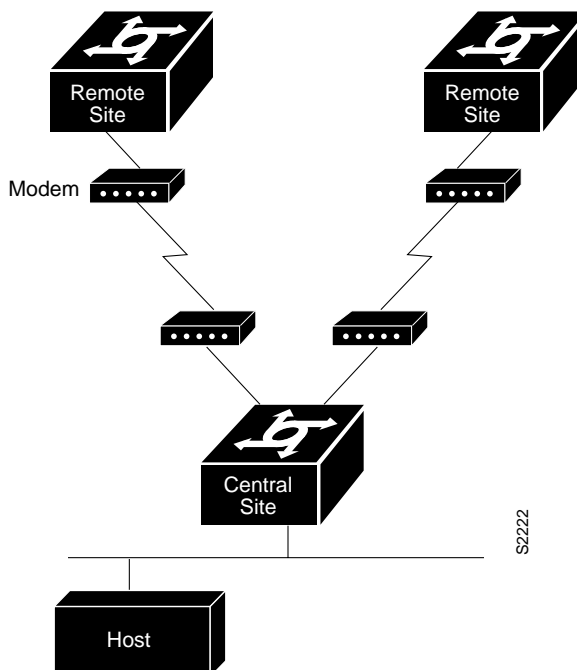
Communication servers support full routing functionality, determining the most efficient path for sending data packets to a destination address outside the local network. The communication server gathers and maintains routing information to enable the transmission and receipt of such data packets. Routing information takes the form of entries in a routing table, with one entry for each identified route. The communication server can create and maintain the routing table dynamically to accommodate network-configuration changes when they occur.

Communication servers allow you to route IP and IPX packets over synchronous and asynchronous lines. Dial-on-demand routing (DDR) of IP and IPX packets is supported. A key feature of asynchronous routing is its ability to provide low-cost operation over normal dial-up telephone networks. The communication server's routing capabilities provide remote home and sales offices with cost-effective access to a central site. For example, traffic from PCs and UNIX workstations can be routed through the communication server, eliminating multiple phone lines and modems. Routing over asynchronous lines also provides significant phone-line savings for small offices by allowing dial-up telephone lines to be used rather than more costly leased lines.

All of the IP and IPX routing protocols and special features that are implemented on Cisco routers (including the AGS+, MGS, CGS, and IGS) are available on your communication server. Routing protocols include OSPF, IGRP, RIP, EGP, and BGP. Special routing features include route filtering, priority queuing, access lists, and more.

Figure 1-6 illustrates an IP routing configuration using communication servers. In this configuration, the host is connected to an Ethernet and forms a routing connection with communication servers at remote sites.

Figure 1-6 Asynchronous Remote Access Routing Connectivity



Supported Protocols

A user can dial in and use a port for any of the following types of connections:

- X.25 (ASM-CS only)—X.25 specification permits cost-effective, as-needed access to major public networks in the United States and Europe.
- Telnet and rlogin
- LAT—Local Area Transport (LAT) protocol, Digital's proprietary terminal connection protocol used with Digital minicomputers.
- TN3270—IBM 3278 terminal emulation provides TN3270-based connectivity to IBM hosts over serial lines.
- SLIP and PPP connections to a single PC—SLIP is an inexpensive means of connecting a workstation to a network using asynchronous dial-up modems.
- XRemote—the Network Computing Devices Inc. XRemote terminal facility allows for remote X Window operation.
- TCP/IP and IPX remote access routing—TCP/IP is the most widely implemented protocol suite on networks of all media types. TCP/IP is today's standard for internetworking, and is supported by most computer vendors, including all UNIX-based workstation manufacturers. Our implementation of IPX provides the functionality of Novell's IPX.

This range of functionality is possible because multiple roles can be assigned to each asynchronous interface. Each asynchronous line can be used as a network interface for IP routing some of the time, as a source of data for terminal-server communications (using Telnet, LAT, rlogin, and so forth), for protocol translation, and for telecommuting (using XRemote and SLIP).

Supported Interfaces and Connections

Communication servers handle multiple device interfaces. Asynchronous RS-232 serial lines are aggregated onto a high-speed network interface. ASCII terminals, modems, printers, and host serial ports are among the devices you can connect to communication servers. You can use a number of methods to connect serial devices, including RJ-11, RJ-45, and 50-pin Telco connectors. The 500-CS supports RJ-45 connectors only. The ASM-CS supports Telco and RJ-11 connectors.

The network interfaces for communication servers provide easy connectivity. The network interface is typically Ethernet, but can also be synchronous serial lines and Token Rings (ASM-CS only).

Using communication servers, any RS-232-compatible device, serial laser printer, film recorder, plotter, and so on, can become a shared resource to your organization over a local network.

Supported Platforms

Part of the power and flexibility of your communication server results from the range of possible physical configuration options. You can choose from single-board systems, or card-based chassis configurations that offer processor, back-panel connector mountings, and communications interfaces best suited to their network.

The following communication server models are available:

- The ASM-CS model is built on the 9-slot A chassis and can support from 16 to 112 asynchronous lines. Network interfaces include synchronous serial, Ethernet, or Token Ring. The capability offered by the ASM makes it an ideal choice for communication server connectivity in a campus or corporate environment.
- The 500-CS model has one Ethernet port and can support 8 or 16 asynchronous ports. The standard 2 megabytes (MB) of memory can be expanded to 4 or 10 MBs.

Microprocessors

The ASM-CS offers a choice of an MC68020 microprocessor with 4 MB of memory or an MC68040 microprocessor with 16 MB of memory. The 500-CS is based on the MC68331 processor, which comes with two MB of RAM and is expandable to 4 MB or 10 MB of RAM, and offers both RS-232 and RS-423 serial connectors, as well as hardware and software flow control. All our microprocessors contain onboard RAM, system ROM holding all operating system software, bootstrap software, and diagnostic software.

Our systems also include nonvolatile memory that retains configuration information despite power losses or system reboots. With the nonvolatile memory option, the terminal and network servers need not rely on other network servers for configuration and boot service information.