

Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport

ClearCube Blades Support Expansive Flight Information Display System



a Dell OptiPlex that was mounted directly behind it.”

With 10-14 PCs mounted in each elevated display bank, the airport’s IT staff experienced significant maintenance issues. “Getting to the PCs was difficult because they were located in very high, inaccessible places. We had to take special precautions to comply with OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] regulations since the technicians were working with things so high off the ground,” says Parrish.

The elevated PCs posed not only a risk to the technician on the ladder, but also to the people walking below. “With the computers located in such public areas, we had to either work on them after hours or cordon off the area,” says Parrish.

The Solution

Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport was attracted to the ClearCube solution because it would remove the PCs from behind the display screens. ClearCube condenses the PC into an Intel®-based “blade” form-factor and rack-mounts it in a secure location. A small access device (user port) connects the screens to the centralized blades over standard cabling. About the size of a paperback book, the user ports take up considerably less space behind the display screens than traditional PCs.

DFW deployed its ClearCube blades in multiple telecom closets distributed throughout the airport. “Since the blades are out of the public eye, we can now perform maintenance any time, night or day, within relative privacy,” says Parrish. The airport also uses user port accessories called Multi-Video eXpanders (MVX) to drive up to four displays on a single blade.

OVERVIEW

► The Challenge

Deliver full PC functionality to a distributed flight information display system without mounting bulky computing hardware behind the elevated screens

► The Solution

Deploy ClearCube blades in remote telecom closets and connect to display screens via small access devices

► The Benefit

A high-density, centralized computing solution that enhances uptime levels and eliminates on-site maintenance in hard-to-reach display banks

With over four million passengers traveling through its terminals each year, the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) is one of the world’s busiest airports. DFW was recently named the world’s best cargo airport and is consistently recognized for its dedication to innovation and community enrichment.

The Challenge

Like most airports, DFW uses a network of elevated display screens to provide passengers and personnel with the latest flight information. In an airport that spans approximately 18,000 acres, the flight information display system requires over 1,000 screens. “The screens are grouped in banks of 10, 12 or 14 throughout the airport,” says John Parrish, associate vice president in charge of terminal technology at DFW International Airport. “Before ClearCube, each screen was powered by

The Benefit

Adopting a centralized computing solution enabled DFW to simplify the maintenance and management of its flight information display system. Rather than climbing up to a display bank to perform repairs and maintenance, the airport's IT staff can now execute all tasks either remotely through the ClearCube management software or directly within the telecom closet.

"When we had a PC behind each screen, we didn't have a very good set of tools to manage them all," says Parrish. "For example, a couple of years ago when the Love Bug Virus was running rampant, I had to go to each and every display across the entire campus to do virus updates. With ClearCube, all the blades are conveniently

located in a few areas, and I can remotely access them without leaving my office."

The solution's centralized hardware and remote management software also enable high uptime levels. "The ClearCube solution definitely enhances uptime. When it comes time to replace a faulty unit, we don't have to climb up to the screen, take down a heavy PC and put up a new one. A technician can just go into a telecom closet, take out the broken blade from the rack and slip in a hot spare blade," says Parrish.

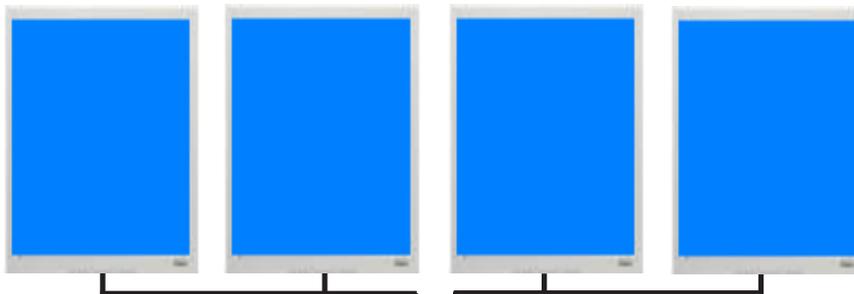
Utilizing a centralized ClearCube solution, the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport is able to simply and efficiently manage its expansive flight information display system.

"We're always adding more screens to the display system, so I anticipate we will be adding more blades as well," says Parrish.

"ClearCube comes with an entire management solution built right in it."

— John Parrish
Associate Vice President
in charge of terminal technology
Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport

How It Works



Multi-Video eXpander
Enables one blade to drive up to four separate displays



User Port

Connects displays to ClearCube blade over industry standard cable



Central Data Center

Up to 112 ClearCube blades can be housed in a standard 6 ft (42U) rack