

REMOTE MANAGEMENT

Peppercon eRIC

PRICE £499 (exc VAT)

SUPPLIER Dakota Computer Solutions 020 8438 3800

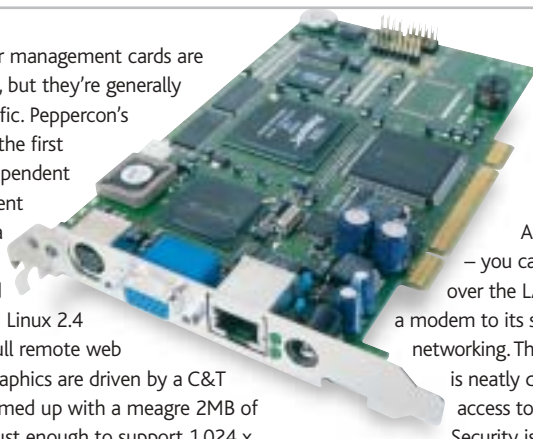
INTERNET www.peppercon.com

BASIC WARRANTY Two years RTB

VERDICT A smart remote management adaptor that compares well on price with proprietary products and is well featured.

Remote server management cards are nothing new, but they're generally vendor specific. Peppercon's eRIC claims to be the first manufacturer-independent remote management card. Powered by a 200MHz PowerPC processor, the card runs an embedded Linux 2.4 kernel delivering full remote web browser access. Graphics are driven by a C&T 69000 chipset teamed up with a meagre 2MB of video memory – just enough to support 1,024 x 768 with 16-bit colour.

Installation is trickier than for proprietary boards, as you have to locate the power and reset jumpers on the server's motherboard and wire them through to the card. The rest is simple enough – remove or disable the existing graphics adaptor, fit the eRIC card and power up.



An optional external power supply allows the eRIC card to function even when the server is switched off.

Access options abound – you can connect to the card over the LAN or Internet or add a modem to its serial port for dial-up networking. The main web interface is neatly designed with easy access to all the functions. Security is good too, as access is controlled with users and groups and the card supports encrypted communications over HTTPS.

The remote console option fires up a Java applet that gives you full control of the selected server, although the response times occasionally slowed to a crawl in our tests. You can remotely view the server's power status and send long

and short power button presses and hard resets. The optional external power supply allows the eRIC card to function even when the server is switched off.

The eRIC is a well-designed remote management product that would be particularly useful in companies which have invested in generic systems that don't provide these options. Features are similar to those found in proprietary products offered by blue-chip manufacturers and the eRIC also competes well on price.

DAVE MITCHELL

PC PRO RATINGS

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

SPECIFICATIONS PCI remote management adaptor card, 200MHz PowerPC processor, 32MB of SDRAM memory, Chips & Technology 69000 graphics chipset with 2MB of memory, nine-pin DIN serial, VGA monitor and 10/100BaseTX Ethernet ports, serial modem and power/reset cables, web browser interface, virtual floppy builder and eRIC file transfer utilities bundle, supports WOL, DHCP, SNMP, HTTPS, graphics drivers for Windows 95, 98, ME, NT, 2000 and XP supplied. Optional power supply, £22.

PRINT SERVER

SEH InterCon ISD 200

PRICE £1,110 (exc VAT)

SUPPLIER SEH 01273 773011

INTERNET www.seh-technology.co.uk

BASIC WARRANTY Two years RTB

VERDICT A powerful little print spooler that looks far better value than HP's 4200, although the high price tag means print demands need to be equally high to make it a worthy purchase.

Print server specialist SEH's last visit to PC Pro was with its innovative IC154-WLANBOX (see *Enterprise*, issue 91, p183) – a neat wireless print server that was one of the first of its kind on the market. The ISD 200 could have earned similar accolades had it been delivered on time, as it was originally announced back in June 2001, but development problems delayed the product launch.

The ISD 200 is an intelligent print spooler that aims to offload print queue overheads from workstations and network servers. The appliance runs Linux and Samba Server and, for such a small box, packs a decent hardware punch. It comes equipped with a 233MHz processor teamed up with 64MB of SDRAM memory and a 10GB Fujitsu hard disk. Up to three printers can be attached, as the appliance has a pair of USB ports and a standard parallel port.

Installation is simple: use DHCP or manually enter an IP address from the front-panel keypad



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and LCD. The web browser management allows you to run a quick setup routine, which includes a search facility for locating other networked printers. These can be reassigned to queues managed by the ISD 200, so reducing overheads further. Management features tools are extensive. Queue activity and a job history log are viewable from the web interface, and access to each printer can be limited with address lists.

You don't see many of these devices, since

most workgroup printers come with internal server cards installed. Also, the fact that the only competition at this level comes from HP's Print Server Appliance 4200 (see *Enterprise*, issue 88, p229) gives some indication of the size of this market. Even so, the ISD 200 compares favourably on price with the HP alternative, as it costs £600 less yet has just as much power under the bonnet. It also provides three printer ports, whereas the 4200 has none.

The ISD 200 would do well in workgroups that want to move printers away from local workstation attachment and centralise their use and management. Unfortunately, this target market may not want to pay the asking price.

DAVE MITCHELL

PC PRO RATINGS

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

SPECIFICATIONS Intel StrongARM 233MHz processor, 4MB of Flash memory, 64MB of SDRAM, 10GB Fujitsu 2.5in hard disk, 10/100BaseTX Ethernet port, two USB ports, parallel port, internal power supply, web browser management interface, Linux OS and Samba Server, supports HTTP, SNMP, DHCP, Sockets, LPD and SMB.