

# Porcupine Computers

Case Study

## Tun®Plus Provides Reliable Host Access Solution for Porcupine Computers' Credit Bureau Clients

Porcupine Computers, a Sudbury, Ontario-based subsidiary of the Porcupine Credit Corporation, provides debt collection and credit reporting software to approximately 40 credit bureaus across Canada varying in size from five to 60 employees. With more and more of its clients seeking to replace terminals with network PCs to enable multi-tasking, Porcupine Computers chose Tun Plus for precise and reliable terminal emulation.

### CONFIGURATION

- **Tun Plus Solutions:**  
PC-to-Host
- **Host System/Applications:**  
SCO Unix host running Porcupine Computers credit management software application Network and serial connectivity
- **Emulation Type:**  
Wyse 50/60

### CHALLENGE

Porcupine Computers has been in the collection and credit reporting business for more than 60 years, developing software solutions for credit bureaus and marketing its software as part of a complete system including a server and related hardware.

"As computers get cheaper and the convenience of a network is something businesses can't go without, more offices are using PCs instead of terminals," said Keith Thornton, Porcupine Computers programmer/ analyst. "Our clients want to use PCs to do word processing and other essential tasks - including being able to connect to the server for access to our software." Thornton's responsibilities at Porcupine Computers include software programming and support, system administration, and hardware technical support.

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS



Porcupine Computers' automated debt collection software system is the result of more than 12 years of development by Porcupine Computers software engineers working with credit bureau collectors, managers, and support staff. The application runs on a SCO Unix server, with access provided to clients via Wyse terminals or PCs equipped with terminal emulation software.

### SOLUTION

After trying several alternatives, Thornton began using Tun Plus three years ago for PC-to-Host connectivity - after a recommendation from Porcupine Computers' main source for IT products. Thornton has become familiar with the reliability of Tun Plus and is providing Porcupine Computers' clients with that experience.

"I haven't found any other terminal emulator that will do the job as well as the Tun emulator," said Thornton. "Tun behaves exactly like a terminal, and there's no configuration for our users. They just select Wyse, and it goes. With other products you get reversed video, or lines on the screen, or maybe the arrow keys don't work."

### BENEFITS

For Porcupine Computers, the bottom-line benefit of Tun Plus is its dependability. "If you have a PC, you've got to get a connection somehow," said Thornton. "I've found Tun the best solution to do that," he said. "You try other things and you may get by; they may work and they may not, but nothing does the job as smoothly and efficiently as Tun."



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Tun Plus also simplifies programming and maintenance for Thornton. "With Tun it's simple to dial in to remote offices for system maintenance," he said. "And Tun's support for multiple Windows makes the programming part of my job much easier."

For Porcupine clients, Tun Plus helps increase productivity. "Credit bureau managers love being able to view multiple screens simultaneously," Thornton said. "Prior to Tun they would have to wait for reports to print before they could do anything else. Now they can run a credit report on one screen, an accounting report on another screen, and do word processing on another. Multi-tasking helps their entire office be more productive, and the credit bureau managers appreciate that."

## FUTURES

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Because of its reliability, Thornton said he will continue recommending Tun Plus to all of Porcupine Computers' clients. "I always recommend Tun first, because I'm familiar with this product and can help install it," he said. "It always helps that we're using Tun Plus here [at Porcupine Computers], because it makes support easier." In addition, Porcupine Computers has participated in development of Tun Plus releases as a beta test site.

To take full advantage of Tun Plus' powerful capabilities, Thornton plans to explore further use of its customisation tools to create emulation views with added colours, toolbars, function-key panels, and clickable hot spots. "No matter what happens in the future, we will always need reliable access to our legacy system," Thornton noted. "We'll be using Tun Plus for many years to come."



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