1 InfoServer and DIGITAL InfoServer Client for DIGITAL UNIX

This chapter presents an overview of InfoServer and DIGITAL InfoServer Client for DIGITAL UNIX functions.

1.1 InfoServer Functions

The InfoServer system is an Ethernet-based, high-performance, virtual device server. It can serve physical device media and sets of logical disk blocks to the network. Host systems running the appropriate client software can connect to virtual devices served by the InfoServer system and use them as though they are locally attached devices.

Unlike a file server, the InfoServer system does not impose a file system on the virtual devices that it serves. This means that the InfoServer system can serve a disk with any type of on-disk file structure. The host client system itself interprets the on-disk structure, allowing each client system to use its own native file system. Multiple on-disk structures can be served by and accessed on a single InfoServer system at the same time.

The InfoServer system can perform the following functions:

- **Make compact discs available to clients on the network**

  The InfoServer system serves compact discs automatically, using their volume label as the service name when the server is booted or when compact discs are inserted into InfoServer drives. You do not have to perform any management action. Client systems simply bind to and mount the compact discs under their volume labels.

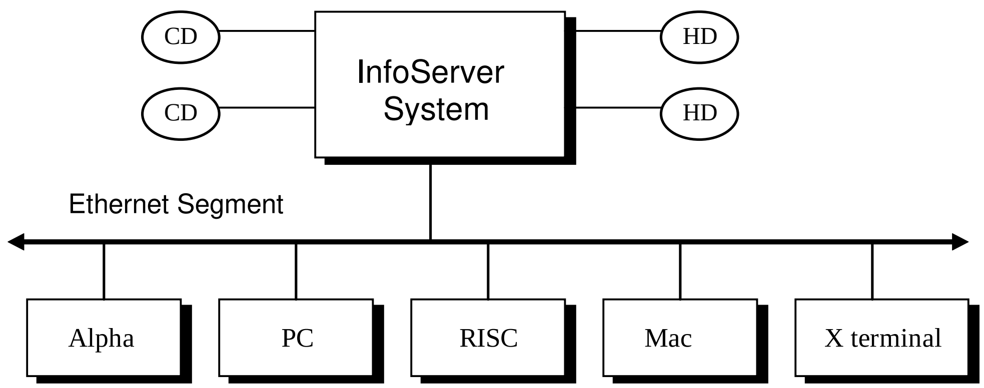
  The InfoServer system can automatically serve compact discs that are in ODS-2 and ISO 9660 format. Other media types, such as DIGITAL UNIX media, can be served manually through the InfoServer management interface (see Section 5.1.2).

- **Serve read/write disk partitions**

  A partition is a logical subset of a read/write disk. A single disk can be subdivided into several partitions, each of which can be served to the network independently. To remote client systems, these partitions appear to be whole disks. For example, a client system using DIGITAL InfoServer Client for DIGITAL UNIX software can access InfoServer partitions and use them as though they are local hard disks.

Figure 1-1 shows the relationship of the InfoServer system to several possible client systems. In this figure, the four compact disc drives connected to the server appear to the client systems as local devices. The Alpha system and the personal computer (PC) might be using one or two of the compact discs for software distribution and online documentation, while the Macintosh system might be referencing a disk partition on the InfoServer system. The X terminal boots from the InfoServer system and uses InfoServer disks for page, font, and customization files.

Figure 1-1 InfoServer System Serving Clients



You can simply connect the InfoServer system to your Ethernet local area network and turn it on. After the server is initialized, or bootstrapped, the server software automatically makes available, or serves, to client systems the device media connected to it. For example, if you insert a compact disc into a server drive, the server detects this new device and automatically serves it to client systems by using the volume label as the service name.

The server bootstraps from its internal RZ read/write disk drive, on which the InfoServer software is preinstalled. Any future InfoServer software updates will be distributed on compact discs. As these new releases become available, you can install the software onto the internal RZ disk for subsequent booting.

You might want to customize server features. You can control InfoServer functions by logging into the server and entering server commands, described in the *InfoServer System Operations Guide*.

1.2 DIGITAL InfoServer Client for DIGITAL UNIX Functions

DIGITAL InfoServer Client for DIGITAL UNIX software enables clients running the DIGITAL UNIX operating system to access virtual device services offered by InfoServer systems on a local area network.

DIGITAL InfoServer Client for DIGITAL UNIX software components include the following:

- LASTport driver

  The LASTport driver provides reliable data transfer services for its clients. It interacts with the Data Link driver and the LASTport/Disk client driver as an efficient transport for a virtual device service. The LASTport driver can support other applications, such as a primitive data queuing service.

- LASTport/Disk client driver

  The LASTport/Disk client driver presents a standard block device interface to the system. The DIGITAL UNIX file system interacts with the LASTport/Disk client as if the LASTport/Disk client is a local disk driver. The LASTport/Disk client driver supports both raw and buffered interfaces.

- LASTport and LASTport/Disk client utilities

  A set of utilities running in user mode allows the system manager to perform the following operations:

  – Enable and disable the LASTport transport and LASTport/Disk virtual device services

- Bind remote device services to local LASTport/Disk client device units
- Show status and counters
- Configure and maintain LASTport and LASTport/Disk client services

Chapter 6 describes these utilities. Figure 1-2 shows the configuration of DIGITAL InfoServer Client for DIGITAL UNIX components.

Figure 1-2 DIGITAL InfoServer Client for DIGITAL UNIX Components