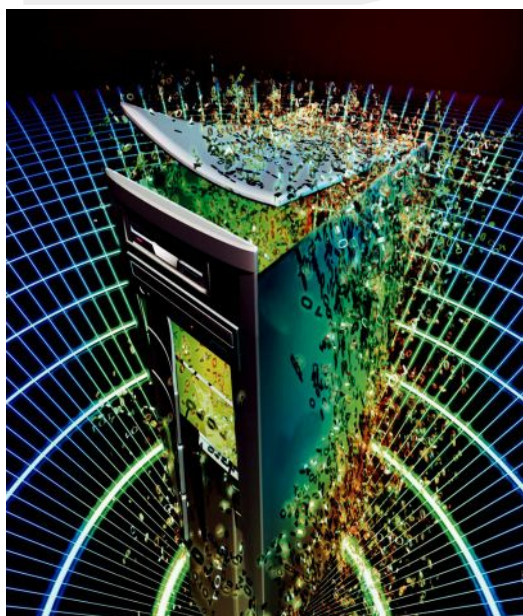# Main frame in our midst

Try to imagine tens-of–thousands users trying to connect to your local machine at one time – what will happen?

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There is a certain misconception on everyone's mind about mainframe: it's obsolete. However, this could not be further that the truth. Mainframe of today plays a central role in the daily operation of the world's largest companies including many of the Fortune 1000 companies. In fact even in Malaysia, the majority of banks and central government agencies use mainframes in their daily operations. As such, the mainframes are not obsolete – they are just hidden from the public eyes.

What are mainframes?

Mainframes are computing systems that enable businesses to host databases, servers and applications in a central capacity; offering a great degree of security, speed and capacity. Today the term mainframe is being used less and less. This is because the concept of centralized computing has become synonymous with '*servers*'. Even IBM is calling the latest generation of mainframes 'The System-z Servers'. Does this mean that any server could be classified as a mainframe? Certainly not!

The most obvious physical difference between a mainframe and a server is the size. While a server could be the size of a common CPU, the mainframes of yesteryears used to be the size of a room! However, modern mainframes have shrunk in size – it is now ONLY the size of a big refrigerator. There are various other differences between a server and a mainframe