

Virtual Stream

Virtual Desktops for 2500 Users

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This Scottish Council requires a new way of delivering desktops to end users. The requirements for a common desktop are as demanding as ever, and for an ageing estate, a major overhaul is required.

Situation

The council looks after a population of nearly 250 000 people.

Virtual Stream is working with the incumbent IT provider and is responsible for delivering the Virtual Desktop Project. Virtual Stream is responsible for the high level design and delivery of the proof of concept. The next stage for Virtual Stream is the initial implementation for 400 concurrent users with potential ramp up to some 2500.

Virtual Stream's remit is to carry out every aspect of the virtual desktop project. We are responsible for design of the base infrastructure (where virtual desktops will work and where hosted shared desktops are better suited), how to deliver applications to those desktops (installed, streamed by Citrix or streamed by Microsoft), and how other software products should be used, such as roaming profile solutions.

We are also trialling several different thin client devices from a variety of vendors and will recommend one, possibly two types of device for roll out.

From a project management perspective, we form a part of the program management team, reporting to the data centre project manager on a weekly basis.

Deliverables include a high level design and a bill of materials followed by a low level design. We are also responsible for the install and commissioning all of the systems.

Solution

The proof of concept is nearing completion, with a hosted desktop being delivered via several thin client devices. The hosted desktop is based on XenApp 6 and Provisioning Server 5.6 with applications being based on Microsoft's Application Virtualisation product, App-V 4.6.

XenDesktop 4 is being tested for specific use cases.

We are trialling 3rd party workspace solutions for roaming profiles.

Solution Overview

Customer Profile

This council looks after 250 000 people and covers a wide geographic area.

Business Situation

The council are committed to a major revamp of the desktop estate and see the use of virtual desktops and thin client hardware as a key solution for cost effective desktop delivery

Solution

Virtual Stream recommended using both Citrix XenDesktop and Citrix XenApp as a solution using the best of both products to deliver the right solution in the right situation. Thin client devices are inexpensive, boot up quickly and require less power to run.

The implementation will commence as soon as the new data centre is installed and the Citrix infrastructure will run from several server blades running with Microsoft Hyper-V 2008 R2 installed.

Benefits

The benefits are clear; currently there is a huge mix of desktop operating system revisions – a Citrix virtual desktop will deliver identical desktops to each user every time (based on Provisioning Server streaming a single image to each server). User profiles will give end users an element of personalisation. The latest applications will be delivered to this desktop (such as Office 2010 and Office Communicator 2007 R2 with audio) but will be controlled centrally reducing the cost of support and maintenance.

Applications are delivered in a variety of different mechanisms currently with all the support and maintenance that goes with it. The new virtual desktop infrastructure will provide a common mechanism for desktop and application delivery, simplifying the current myriad of systems.

The introduction of the latest thin clients will also reduce the support and maintenance as they will not require patching or anti-virus protection. Where thin clients replace traditional desktop PCs' the power saving will be considerable, based on replacing thousands of desktops. The costs of replacement too will be reduced as will power consumption; potential power requirements could be less than 10 watts per device.

Secure remote access for staff is an added benefit; no end user VPN to contend with and no need for council equipment to be used to login securely. This feature is optional but comes free with the Citrix software.

For More Information

For more information about Virtual Stream products and services, visit the Web site at:
www.virtualstream.co.uk

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