Case study

Education

Supporting staff on the go

This organisation was keen to find a solution to support its employees who wanted to carry out work away from the office in a secure fashion

Royal College of Physicians

The customer

This organisation was one of the first medical professional bodies to receive a royal charter, in 1518, and since then it has been continuously active in improving practice medicine, primarily through training and qualifying new physicians.

It supports its fellows and members during every stage of their career, providing guidance, resources and insights for some 28,000 physicians across the UK and internationally.

The challenge

The customer adopted desktop virtualisation in June 2010 to provide end users with a remote access solution. At this point the VDI environment resided in a stand-alone college site, supporting up to 70 concurrent Microsoft Windows 7 desktop sessions. Microsoft Office 2010 represented the primary suite of applications within the desktop image, with some applications streamed on demand.

With approximately 450 users in the organisation, there was a rising demand for remote access and flexible working practices. This drove a requirement to deploy an additional VDI environment, capable of initially supporting an additional 100 virtual desktops, and with scope to expand even further.

One of the key challenges was to provide a VDI solution that would deliver equivalent or greater performance than the existing physical desktops in use.

The solution

To achieve the 'better than PC' performance required, Atlantis ILIO was chosen to provide disk performance supporting the VMware View VDI platform. Xtravirt was engaged based on its partnership with VMware and experience in working with VMware View and Atlantis Computing's ILIO Virtual Storage Array, in addition to Xtravirt's proven capabilities in End User Computing.

VMware View, hosted on a VMware vSphere 5.1 platform, provided secure, centralised desktops that could be accessed from within the organisation's network via differing endpoints, and externally via its VPN or VMware View Security server.

Floating virtual desktops, with the persona management fulfilled entirely by Liquidware Labs ProfileUnity suite, were chosen to ensure that users always received the same experience as well as reducing the storage footprint required. Liquidware Labs ProfileUnity allowed a user's personal settings to be centrally stored and applied dynamically to all sessions.

VMware View allowed for the deployment of Thin Clients, thereby reducing the requirements for a rolling desktop replacement strategy.

Project at a glance

Requirements

- Technical design for the VDI environment
- Enable international and remote access
- Build & test the selected solution and benchmark against current processes

Solution

- VMware View on vSphere 5 infrastructure
- Atlantis ILIO Diskless Storage
- Liquidware Labs Profile management suite
- Optimised Windows 7 image
- Tuned PCoIP for International access across the WAN
- SafeWord two-factor authentication

Results

- Delivery of a scalable virtual desktop solution
- 'Better than PC' performance with 3x improvement in storage density
- Corporate desktops accessible from multiple endpoint devices, providing seamless remote and on-site working environment
- Rapid provisioning of virtual desktops to third parties

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Consultant commentary

"Thanks to a combination of fast access storage from Atlantis and Profile Management from LiquidWareLabs, combined with a solid VMware Horizon base, this deployment was at the leading edge of VDI and offered a real competitor to the physical desktop in terms of speed and usability; allowing users to experience a consistently fast and secure desktop experience. Xtravirt's close collaboration and professional relationships with Atlantis, LiquidwareLabs and VMware, along with their experience in the virtualisation space, led to this project being a success"

Chris Mitchell, Technical Consultant, Xtravirt

The results

- Xtravirt delivered a next-generation computing platform utilising a modular design allowing for future growth and scale
- VMware View Security servers allowed third parties to access the customer's virtual desktops from their own machines, negating the need for the customer to provide hardware
- Microsoft Windows 7 was delivered specifically for the project, and Xtravirt's optimised Operating System image design was key to driving down I/O requirements and improving consolidation ratios
- Atlantis ILIO provided a 'better than PC' performance with a lower overall CAPEX and a threefold improvement in storage density
- User persona management provided by Liquidware Labs ProfileUnity provided seamless transition between endpoint devices

About Xtravirt

Xtravirt is a leading, independent provider of enterprise virtualisation solutions. We deliver data centre, workspace and cloud transformational solutions to clients across public and private sectors, both in the UK and internationally.

Our consulting organisation is recognised globally for contributions to industry and community development which, combined with our astute management, methodology and proven track record, provide unsurpassed value to our customers.

Please visit our case study library at xtravirt.com where you can read more of our success stories.

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