xtravirt

Case study
Government

Shared virtual desktop model for fire & rescue service

Xtravirt delivers a VDI prototype to reduce cost and modernise

CAMBRIDGESHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

We partnered with: **CISCO**

The customer

This customer's organisation is responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to 820,000 residents within a UK region. It operates from 28 fire stations and has a separate headquarters housing the senior management team, control room, central operational teams and many support staff.

The challenge

The customer wanted to implement a shared services IT model with another regional fire and rescue service. Each organisation had separate IT systems, staff, and working methods, and was also predominately using an operating system approaching end-of-life support.

The solution

Xtravirt was engaged to design and build a desktop virtualisation proof of concept solution which addressed a core use case, and could be deployed as the basis for a new modern desktop standard in a modular and scalable way.

To gain a solid understanding of the requirements, Xtravirt held workshops with key business stakeholders and the IT team. From this output, a set of functional and non-functional requirements was produced, to be adhered to during the design phase.

Regular updates and review workshops were held throughout the design phase to ensure a managed approval process from the key stakeholders in the project.

Citrix XenDesktop was chosen as the desktop delivery mechanism to provide a desktop 'pod', built on top of a FlexPod (Cisco, NetApp and VMware solution), and providing a fully centralised solution.

A single desktop image was created with common business applications, and assigned to all users. A stateless model was designed which meant that each desktop was refreshed at logoff, providing a fresh corporate desktop at each logon with the user persona being stored centrally, meaning that each user's desktop was always maintained and personalised at login.

Dedicated Wyse thin clients were deployed as part of the design, together with the Citrix Receiver, which was also installed on existing PCs, enabling the customer to save additional cost through re-use of existing hardware.

Project at a glance

Requirements

- Deploy a centralised, modular and scalable solution that could form the basis of future expansion
- Support a core use case consisting of key business applications
- Update the desktop operating system from Windows XP to Windows 7
- Provide simple and reliable remote access
- Support multiple location connectivity
- Provide multi-media video support

Solution

- A highly scalable VDI solution based on the FlexPod platform, with VMware hypervisor and Citrix XenDesktop architecture
- A single stateless image allowing for easy management
- Dedicated thin clients to enhance user experience

Results

- Reduced login times by 2 minutes
- Increased Application responsiveness by 50%
- Increased productivity for roaming staff

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Consultant commentary

"The project was a well-received success and laid established foundations for the customer to confidently begin a production deployment. Xtravirt's proven method and approach to the design, and the seamless integration of a number of complex requirements, resulted in a solution which met and exceeded the customer's expectations."

Seb Hakiel, Senior Consultant, Xtravirt

The results

- A detailed low level design was produced, using the highly scalable 'pod and block' approach, and improving business response

- A fully functional stateless desktop image was deployed to all testers and was met with highly positive feedback. Performance surpassed that of physical PCs, with the key benefit of it being contained in a single master image

- A highly scalable and centralised solution, reducing operational support requirements

- A highly available solution utilising VMware vSphere best practice infrastructure configuration

- A functional test plan created by Xtravirt examined all aspects of availability within the FlexPod infrastructure, and assured the solution prior to commissioning

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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