



## Customer Profile

# Liquidware Labs Solutions Enable NCFE's Smooth Migration to Non-Persistent Virtual Desktops

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- Nick Evans, Senior Infrastructure Engineer  
NCFE

Organization:  
NCFE

Virtual Desktop Users:  
300

Products:  
Stratusphere FIT™  
ProfileUnity™

## Situation

A registered educational charity, NCFE is a national Awarding Organisation, passionate about developing and implementing vocational and academic qualifications in a range of subjects. These qualifications contribute to the success of millions of learners at all levels, bringing them closer to fulfilling their personal goals. Last year alone, more than 340,000 learners from over 2,000 colleges, schools and training organisations chose NCFE as the Awarding Organisation to help them move their careers forward.

Nick Evans is the Senior Infrastructure Engineer responsible for the IT Infrastructure at NCFE. With an impending office relocation and a corresponding budget for a hardware refresh, Mr. Evans took the opportunity to re-assess his Windows 7, fat client PC-desktop environment. Already using VMware vSphere to support his virtualised servers, Mr. Evans wanted to move his 300 users to VMware Horizon. "We needed a much more mobile, agile and collaborative desktop environment for our users," explains Mr. Evans "And the office move was the driver for determining the feasibility of virtual desktops."

## Visibility

Mr. Evans was aware that best practices call for an assessment to determine which users are appropriate candidates to move to a virtual desktop. He highlights, "Our trusted advisor, SITS Group, recommended utilising Liquidware Labs Stratusphere FIT™ to first evaluate the current state of our desktop environment, and then to determine which candidates were suitable for moving to a virtual desktop. Their knowledge and deep understanding of Liquidware Labs solutions impressed me. They took the time to understand my goals, showed me their own Liquidware Labs system and spent a half day running through all the feature sets of Stratusphere and ProfileUnity."

SITS Group deployed Stratusphere FIT for a month. It ran in the background gathering data on all aspects of each individual desktop, from CPU usage to applications installed to web browsers and much more. At the end of that month, the results from Stratusphere FIT were reviewed. "I was amazed at the granularity of the reports out of Stratusphere FIT and the visibility they gave me," comments Mr. Evans. "It was a real eye-opener the amount of different versions of Java and Adobe Reader, for example, that Stratusphere FIT had uncovered." Stratusphere FIT determined that all but 20 developers utilising high-end visual studio applications were ideal candidates for moving to VMware Horizon.

Having reached this stage of the project, SITS Group advised Mr. Evans to implement ProfileUnity to seamlessly migrate all user profiles to the new virtual desktop. "Having digested the results from Stratusphere FIT, we then ran a process to capture all user-profile information with ProfileUnity. This was harvested about a month before the office move, giving us great insight into user behaviour, such as where they stored things and what they needed to move across to their virtual desktop."

The migration from physical desktops to the new VMware Horizon virtual desktop was totally seamless, thanks to ProfileUnity.

## Benefits

The solutions from Liquidware Labs gave Mr. Evans the insight into his environment that enabled him determine the best way to move to a virtual desktop from the outset. "I wanted to ensure the best user experience, and this meant providing a non-persistent virtual desktop for them. Plus, as a small infrastructure team, if a desktop goes wrong, we just want to spin up a new one. Without Liquidware Labs solutions, we would not be able to have a non-persistent desktop scenario, in my opinion."

The solutions continue to provide immense business value, as support calls relative to desktops has decreased from 10 or so a week to less than 2 a month. "From a user's productivity standpoint, their log on and log off times have dramatically reduced. We are also saving significant amounts of storage space as ProfileUnity consolidates and compresses user settings."

## The Future

Mr. Evans has trialed FlexApp and is looking at the feasibility of implementing it within his environment, "Now that we have a robust and secure virtual desktop environment, I am looking at how other elements of the Liquidware Labs solutions, such as FlexApp, can further streamline my virtual desktop environment."

