

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust Treat VDI Implementation Pain with ProfileUnity

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*- Jimmy Parker, Development Office Lead
Southport and Ormskirk
Hospital NHS Trust*

Organization:

Southport and Ormskirk
Hospital NHS Trust

Virtual Desktop Users

3,300

Product:

ProfileUnity™

Overview

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust is the principal healthcare provider to 258,000 people across Southport, Formby and West Lancashire, UK. With a budget of more than £180m and employing 3,300 staff, the Trust treated nearly 248,000 outpatients and more than 60,000 inpatients in 2012/13. With around 500 inpatient beds, the organisation provides care at Southport and Formby District General Hospital and Ormskirk and District General Hospital, as well as at community clinics and patients' homes.

The Trust is also proud to be the home of the North West Regional Spinal Injuries Centre, which provides specialist care for spinal patients from across the North West, North Wales and the Isle of Man. The Centre, which is an internationally recognised centre of excellence for the treatment of people who require permanent mechanical ventilation following spinal cord injury, admits patients from across the United Kingdom for this highly specialised care.

Jimmy Parker is the Development Office Lead within Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust, responsible for delivering IT Services to the 3,300 Trust employees.

In 2013 Mr. Parker faced the challenge that many private and public sector organisations were presented with: migrating away from Windows XP. With a mixed environment of Windows 2003 Terminal Server and Windows XP desktops, Mr. Parker wanted to replace the old environment with something more advantageous to Terminal Services and, with his experience of VDI from a previous role at Aintree NHS, Mr. Parker chose VMware Horizon View 5.3 as part of his migration to Windows 7.

The Challenge

“Presenting IT resources and services to ward environments without IT having to regularly visit the wards ourselves meant that PCs were not an option for us. So we had already deployed thin clients connecting to Terminal Services. However, in the planned migration to Windows 7, I also wanted to provide greater efficiency and mobility for our users. I knew that virtual desktops were the way to go but also wanted to provide a non-persistent model to enable the utmost efficiency gains,” commented Mr. Parker.

Three significant challenges of implementing VDI are integrating the current user environment; ensuring all applications work; and addressing the dis-location between host name and the physical location, as some applications must be installed locally. Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust utilises a proprietary application called Ascribe, which is a pharmacy management system solution that is also used for patient discharge. Therefore, it was imperative this application worked in the new VDI world. Mr. Parker admitted, “I did have to utilise scripting to enable this application to work in our VDI environment.”

Mr. Parker also needed to provide nonpersistent desktops to his 3,000 users and required a product that would allow the users to save some settings, such as their MAPI profile, registry keys, etc., each time they logged on and to ensure their data was available no matter where or when they logged on

The Solution

“I’d previously used RES in my role at Aintree and found it to be overly complicated for our needs. I was aware of AppSense and, in a previous proof of concept, also found their solution to be too expensive due to requiring additional infrastructure to support their database. So I looked at the market for other profile management solutions,” said Mr. Parker. “As we’d made the decision to go with VMware Horizon View, I researched their subreddit (reddit.com/r/vmware) and found many positive mentions of the Liquidware ProfileUnity solution there. So I got in contact with the local team and obtained some evaluation licenses.” If Mr. Parker were not moving to VDI, he would have continued to use roaming profiles. But Mr. Parker knew this wouldn’t work for the new environment. He installed ProfileUnity and was up and running in less than one day. During the proof-of-concept stage, Mr. Parker had little need to contact Liquidware, but on the few occasions when he did he noted, “The quality of Liquidware’s technical support is excellent.

“If you understand profiles and group policy, ProfileUnity is very straightforward. You can set it up yourself, and you don’t need lots of support or expensive professional services. The web interface is simple, and I can’t tell you how awesome it is not to have to install or update a local desktop client!” said Mr. Parker. “ProfileUnity does just what I need it to do – it enables a consistent user environment and troubleshooting profiles is much quicker. With VDI, if a user has a problem, it is likely to be a profile issue. Having everything in one place with ProfileUnity allows me to quickly resolve any issues, significantly reducing support times.”

The Results

Mr. Parker has built a flagship environment that he regularly demonstrates to other NHS Trusts across the UK. VMware Horizon 5.3 combined with Liquidware ProfileUnity running on Dell servers, provides an enviable, highly efficient bedside care IT service. He explained, "We use a combination of Dell Wyse/Teradici P25 zero clients, HP thin clients with Windows embedded and iPads. With ProfileUnity, login times have been reduced from the previous duration of up to 10 minutes – (yes 10 MINUTES!) – to less than 7 seconds for a reconnect and 20 seconds for a full logon, which only occurs once a day for a standard user."

According to Mr. Parker, small gains like speedy login times, make all the difference in the user experience for clinicians and have fostered a much more enthusiastic adoption of the new desktop platform. The ability to perform tasks, such as notating patients' charts, checking prescriptions, creating care or discharge instructions at the patient's side – and performing these tasks efficiently and accurately – advance the timely delivery and quality of health care services which, after all, is the goal of the Trust and other organisations like it across the UK.

Mr. Parker describes the level of efficiency gained by providing the example of a consultant on £90K a year, who would need to wait an average of 10 minutes per patient session simply to login before even beginning to provide aid.

"Our previous login times took 10 minutes due to having to log off the previous user from the device, then boot up a session and then having the next user log in. If you can imagine a senior consultant seeing only six patients, that extra time would add up to a wasted and expensive hour. Now, with VDI and ProfileUnity, consultants can just resume their session in less than 7 seconds. Now that hour has been reduced to just under a minute," said Mr. Parker.

"Our users like the new VDI environment, primarily due to the rapid log in times ProfileUnity facilitates. And I like it because it has significantly reduced our support calls .With a small IT team, that improvement is priceless."



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