



Local authority drives new desktop culture

Gemeente Groningen boosts flexibility, enabling personnel to access desktops fast from multiple endpoints, while lowering costs through desktop virtualization



Customer profile



Company	Gemeente Groningen
Industry	Local Government
Country	The Netherlands
Employees	3,000
Website	gemeente.groningen.nl

Business need

Gemeente Groningen wanted to reduce costs by creating a more flexible client infrastructure that would deliver better IT services to personnel.

Solution

The local authority rolled out Dell Wyse vWorkspace across its entire client estate, working with Dell Deployment Services during the initial stages.

Benefits

- Staff gain faster access to desktops from multiple endpoints
- Authority cuts software licensing spend
- Updates installed authority-wide quicker than before
- Simplified migrations support easier upgrade paths
- IT enhances productivity and services

Solutions at a glance

- Cloud Client-Computing

"It's going to be a challenge in the future for the local authority to match the level of success we've had with desktop virtualization."

Robine van den Bor, Project Lead, Gemeente Groningen

Government bodies have been in favour of flexible working for some time. Desktop virtualization is helping them achieve this by enabling delivery of an employee's desktop to multiple devices.

"With desktop virtualization, we can simplify a large part of the process for software migrations. As a result, the IT team will save time and personnel will get the software they need faster and with less disruption."

Ben Lip, vWorkspace and Microsoft Hyper-V System Administrator, Gemeente Groningen

It's also given institutions an opportunity to reduce costs and improve flexibility, a fact that local authority Gemeente Groningen in the Netherlands was quick to identify. It wanted to virtualize its desktops for greater flexible working, giving staff access to their virtual desktops from multiple endpoints in seconds. This would allow the authority to cut the number of desktops because no more than 80 per cent of staff were ever in the offices at the same time.

Indeed, it was the perfect time for the authority to virtualize. The existing client infrastructure, which was largely Microsoft-based, was ageing and becoming more expensive to manage. A virtualized solution would streamline administration and make it easier to update both the underlying operating system and applications. Project Lead Robine van den Bor, who was brought in to manage the desktop virtualization project, says: "Gemeente Groningen was going through a period of change. Departments were being reorganised and greater flexibility was a key driver. The goal was to enable staff to work with the same desktop in the office and from home, while cutting costs."

Looking for a change of technology direction

Based on the authority's requirements, System Engineer Bas Souisa and IT Architect Stefan Ensing began assessing virtualization solutions on the market. They quickly focused on offerings from Citrix and Dell Wyse

vWorkspace. At this point, they asked both Citrix and Dell to help with a proof of concept (POC) so that the authority could make a decision on the right technology for personnel. "We recognised that vWorkspace showed great attention to detail. This was a major investment for the authority, which vWorkspace really understood," she says.

There were a series of site visits to see customers that were already using Citrix and vWorkspace. "Feedback from our visit to two vWorkspace customer sites was impressive. The flexibility of the technology was clear. We liked the solution's blended model, which supported virtual desktops as well as Microsoft Remote Desktop Sessions," she says. "In the end, it came down to the comprehensiveness of the solution, its value and the vendor support. We chose vWorkspace."

The authority put together an in-house migration team to drive the rollout of vWorkspace across 4,500 seats. Dell Deployment Services spent time supporting the internal team with the initial implementation process.

Products & Services

Services

Dell Deployment Services

Software

Dell Wyse vWorkspace

At first, work focused on integrating vWorkspace with the authority's virtualization platforms Windows Server Hyper-V and AppSense, which acts a repository for desktop interfaces."It was crucial to get the integration right to gain the most from vWorkspace," comments van den Bor. "Thankfully, the expertise of our personnel along with the support and documentation from Dell kept things on track. It took us a number of months to finish the work while fulfilling other IT duties, but we completed it successfully."

Authority gains increased value from client infrastructure

The in-house IT team and van den Bor can look back with satisfaction on what they've achieved. Given the detailed business case that van den Bor compiled before starting the project, success wasn't a complete surprise. "We did a lot of research before virtualizing our client estate, building our case around a number of key performance indicators," she says.

The authority has been able to significantly reduce the number of client machines it needs to support. Van den Bor says: "We're getting greater value out of our client estate. Multiple staff can work on the same desktop at different times and get instant access to their applications and data."

Lowering spend by reducing applications

Besides consolidating the number of client machines, Gemeente Groningen has made important gains by streamlining applications. It's common for companies to rationalise applications when virtualizing desktops. As part of the migration process, they will review

what applications go into the main desktop images. Van den Bor says: "We rationalised our application landscape thoroughly as part of the desktop virtualization project."

The reduction has been great news for Gemeente Groningen. It's been able to cut licensing spend, helping the IT department align itself closely with the authority's overall goal of cutting costs. "Again, this project has proved its worth because it's made us look at our desktop software and review what we do and don't need," says van den Bor.

Personalised desktops available in 20 seconds from multiple endpoints

The project wasn't driven purely by cost though. As van den Bor points out, a central goal was improved IT services for employees and more flexible working. "The feedback from staff has been positive," she says. "They can log off from one machine and log in to another, and have the same desktop in front of them."

According to van den Bor, the switch to desktop virtualization has changed people's expectations of IT. "It's going to be a challenge in the future for the local authority to match the level of success we've had with desktop virtualization," she says.

Updates delivered rapidly

The move to desktop virtualization has ensured much more than fast access to data from multiple endpoints. It's also given IT a way to roll out updates and new software faster than before.



As Ben Lip, vWorkspace and Microsoft Hyper-V System Administrator at Gemeente Groningen explains, updating virtual desktops is incredibly straightforward. "We update our golden image, and once we've completed testing the image goes out to our machines," he says. "Now personnel get rapid access to the most up-to-date software available, which maximises their productivity."

Greater IT productivity, better IT services

Lip is looking ahead to future large-scale migrations, such as a possible move to Windows 10. "Major upgrades have always been complex and time-consuming to manage, with testing and manual work sometimes taking months. With desktop virtualization, we can simplify a large part of the process for software migrations. As a result, the IT team will save time and personnel will get the software they need faster and with less disruption," he says.

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