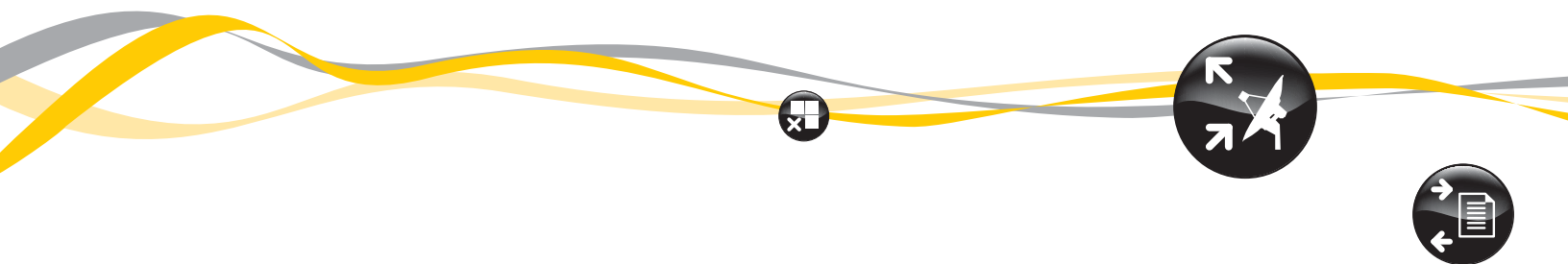


Case Study

Optimizing IT infrastructure for the teaching environment

Business Solutions from IGEL Technology





“Right out of the box, the IGEL thin clients were a breeze to configure,”

Jim Ward, Longview School District.

The Longview School District serves elementary, middle and high schools in the city of Longview, Washington. The district’s mission is to ensure that every student learns the skills, attitude and knowledge to become a responsible citizen in a rapidly changing society. These goals are accomplished through a partnership of students, staff, parents and community that is focused on results and a commitment to challenge each learner to reach their potential.

The customer

- Providing services to help schools in Longview, Washington, USA
- Thirteen sites, 1,000 terminals and 1,500 PCs

Small IT department with Terminals at Multiple Locations and a Discontinued Thin Client Solution

The Longview School District is made up of thirteen sites, including seven elementary schools, three middle schools and two high schools. A small IT department, comprised of six technicians located in one site, is responsible for ensuring that roughly 1,000 terminals and 1,500 PCs within the district are working at all times. When it came to IT services, Longview faced the challenge of effectively and efficiently supporting students, faculty and staff scattered across the thirteen different locations.

“We initially decided to go with thin clients because we had a limited tech staff trying to support hundreds of workstations, and for our environment thin clients and virtual desktops were the best fit since you can manage them remotely,” says Jim Ward, technology support coordinator at Longview School District.

Prior to implementing IGEL thin clients, Ward and his team had been using Neoware clients for their terminal needs. When Neoware was acquired by HP in 2007, many of the terminals that Longview was using were discontinued. The district tested out HP’s replacement offering; however it was considerably more expensive than what they had originally purchased from

Neoware. Additionally, Ward and his team were underwhelmed by HP’s management console, which did not provide the centralized capabilities they needed.

Making the Switch to IGEL

Once the district decided not to implement HP thin clients, they conducted an extensive search to assess comparable products on the market. During this search, Ward came across Wyse and IGEL, and decided to test out both offerings. After evaluating each vendor’s solution, the technicians came to the consensus that the IGEL thin clients were more cost-effective and offered a much better management console than Wyse.

Initially, Longview deployed roughly 25 IGEL LX Smart thin clients. The implementation process was so easy, the IT team was able to configure and rollout the new terminals almost immediately. Ward was impressed by how straightforward and easy the installation process was, and the thin clients were up and running within one day. The ease-of-configuration and improvement in the enduser experience encouraged Longview to continue replacing older Neoware models with IGEL thin clients. Within the past two years the district has deployed hundreds of IGEL thin clients, which now also include the IGEL UD2 LX models.

“Right out of the box, the IGEL thin clients were a breeze to configure,” explains Ward. “We can literally mail a thin client to a location, plug everything in, and it just configures itself. In addition, if any questions arose during the implementation process, the IGEL team was very responsive and helpful to all of our needs.”

IGEL’s exceptional Management Tool

In addition to price, what ultimately set IGEL apart from other vendors was IGEL’s complimentary Universal Management Suite (UMS), the software that comes license-free with every

The challenge

- Implement cost-effective IT solution
- Replace discontinued product
- Provide centralized management capabilities
- Offer reliable hardware that can be easily configured



IGEL thin client. The extremely powerful yet easy-to-use software allows IT support to remotely manage the thin clients, which minimizes support costs. With thirteen different sites, the UMS system also saves Ward's small IT team a lot of travel time and hassle. "By using IGEL's UMS, we can manage our entire group of thin clients from one interface," explains Ward. "No matter where the thin clients are located, we can remotely send policies and configure them without dispatching a technician to the site."

Although the remote management capability was offered by Neoware thin clients to some extent—the auto-configuration component was not as advanced. With the Neoware thin clients, Ward's team had to manually send configuration details, whereas with IGEL, they are able to just update them automatically. "I would have to say that in a set-up of a single thin client, the auto-configuration saves us about 15-30 minutes, which adds up to a lot of time savings with as many thin clients as we're operating," continues Ward.

In addition to the UMS capability, Ward was also impressed with the range of USB storage devices supported by IGEL thin clients. Unlike their former Neoware clients, which offered limited device support, Ward can plug almost any USB device into the IGEL thin clients — including jump drives, mice, and keyboards — and the IGEL clients connect almost immediately.

"In general, our IGEL thin clients look and act just like a PC. We can run the office suite, browse the internet and print just like we would with a traditional desktop," explains Ward.

Longview greets the Future with IGEL Thin Clients

The IGEL thin clients are fulfilling and even surpassing Longview School District's needs and expectations. The district has found the units are a great fit for a wide variety of users and functions. For example, teachers use them as their primary work stations, students use them for labs, word processing and internet searches, and librarians use them for book searches and check-out stations. Ward and his team realize that thin clients are very easy to use for a wide range of applications, and that most of the time, students and teachers prefer to operate thin clients rather than desktop work stations.

"We find that most people would rather use thin clients because the log-on is faster and they provide a much more



controlled environment," says Ward. "Thin clients not only run on a faster server, but we don't have all of the problems with malware and spyware that infect and slow down our XP workstations. Overall, thin clients provide a much more stable, secure environment for a variety of uses."

Though the primary business driver for seeking out a new thin client solution was HP's acquisition of Neoware, the Longview School District was so impressed with IGEL thin clients that they plan to continue using IGEL in the future. "We've been using a thin client environment for many years, and in my opinion IGEL thin clients are hands down the best devices we've used to date," concludes Ward. "Not only does IGEL offer the best 'bang for your buck' compared to other vendors, but the UMS and configuration capabilities of the devices are a huge step up from other offerings."

The solution

- 163 IGEL thin client models
- Powerful Universal Management Suite (UMS)
- Ease-of-configuration without time-consuming training
- Cost-effective solution
- Wide range of USB storage device support

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