

Cincinnati
Union Bethel



Case Study

Cincinnati Union Bethel improves service
and security using IGEL thin clients

Business Solutions from IGEL Technology





“The switch to IGEL thin clients gave Cincinnati Union Bethel the best of what’s available technologically, while at the same time lowering the costs for maintenance and support.”

Cincinnati Union Bethel, founded in 1830, is the oldest social services organization west of the Allegheny Mountains. With seven locations throughout the city, the organization strives to provide support services and educational programs for urban women, children and families. Among the organization’s programs are a women’s shelter, after-school centers where children get help with homework, and early childhood education centers. At each center, teachers and staff members share computers to access email, the internet, and other applications.

The customer

- Cincinnati Union Bethel, founded in 1830
- Non-profit organization
- Provides support services and educational programs for urban women, children and families

The challenge

- Provide high-quality computer access at terminals that are used by multiple users
- Lower maintenance costs for an organization that doesn’t have its own IT department
- Increase security at terminals that will be accessed by many users

“Because Cincinnati Union Bethel is a non-profit organization, staff members and teachers need computers to access grants applications and to keep up on the reporting requirements for existing grants,” explained Erin Arnold of Next Step Networking, an MSP provider who oversees of the organization’s IT needs. “Since most computers there are shared by multiple users, any misuse of resources affects everyone, and that was a challenge we needed to address.”

In 2007, Cincinnati Union Bethel relied entirely on PCs, which gave Next Step Networking limited ability to regulate the use of hard-drive space or prevent users from downloading personal files. A second challenge was that the organization had locations scattered across the city, meaning that the IT team had to do a lot of travelling whenever support was needed. If there was a problem with one PC, a site-visit would be required, while a system-wide update required individual visits to all seven locations and servicing each computer individually.

As the company’s PCs reached the end of their lifespan and needed replacement, Arnold recommended a switch from PCs and to thin clients. This infrastructure change would allow for remote management and increased security.

The Solution

At the recommendation of Next Step Networking, Cincinnati Union Bethel purchased 30 thin clients from IGEL for the first round of the organization’s infrastructure change. IGEL stood out to Arnold from a price perspective: the company’s thin client terminals themselves were competitively priced, but a major cost advantage came from the inclusion of a complimentary Remote Management Suite, which comes bundled with every IGEL unit. Using the RMS console, a network administrator can



remotely change the settings of the device or its digital services, re-image devices when new firmware becomes available, and perform diagnostics and support.

To install the thin clients, Arnold's team visited each site for set up. That was the last time in a while that the Next Step Networking team needed to visit the sites; now they manage the thin clients remotely from their office, using IGEL's powerful remote management software.

The benefits

"The impact of the remote management software is remarkable. Now we can offer support from our office with the click of a mouse," said Arnold. "And one click can fix all of the thin clients at once if we want it to. As a managed service provider, we save time by limiting the time we're on the road, and the result is that the customer saves money in maintenance costs."

According to Chad Nieter, Cincinnati Union Bethel's Director of Finance, switching to IGEL thin clients has had a positive impact on operations: "Not only have we upgraded our technology, we've also simplified our operations overall. Since bringing in the thin clients, we been able to increase the number of stations for our staff to work on, and any support issues are easy to resolve because of the remote management software."

Another benefit was that server space is protected from end-users who downloaded files and programs for personal use, a perennial problem in most office environments. Because all storage takes place at the remote server, the network administrator can monitor what is stored, and guard against inappropriate storage. No music file storage is allowed under Cincinnati Union Bethel's current settings.



"While offering computer access to the staff is tremendously important, you also open yourself up to a lot of risk when you give people free access," noted Arnold. "In a setting where multiple users are sharing one terminal, resources can be unfairly dominated by the few users who download items for personal use. People often don't realize how much hard-drive space such files take up."

Conclusion

With IGEL thin clients, Cincinnati Union Bethel has been able to provide its centers with access to the websites and applications they need, while protecting the way its storage resources are used. Given the success of the first round of thin clients, the organization has plans to double its number of terminals by the end of this year.

"As an MSP provider, it's fantastic to be able to deliver a customer both a cost advantage and an upgrade in technology at the same time," Arnold noted. "The switch to IGEL thin clients gave Cincinnati Union Bethel the best of what's available technologically, while at the same time lowering the costs for maintenance and support."

The solution

- IGEL Smart 2110 LX (IGEL UD 2)
- Remote management software enables MSP provider to support terminals remotely, saving on support costs
- Security settings enable managers to control personal file storage
- Solution saves money in support costs

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