

KINGDOM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

When the housing association wanted thin clients to handle multimedia applications they turned to IGEL Technology.



Kingdom Housing Association is a Registered Social Landlord with charitable status. It works across East Central Scotland, providing housing to meet a wide range of needs including affordable housing and low-cost home ownership. As well as being a provider of housing, it also provides a comprehensive Support and Care service, helping people to live independently in the community. In addition, Kingdom is involved in a number of initiatives that go beyond the mainstream housing provision, in support of its mission 'More than a Home'. These include managing the Fife Care and Repair and Small Repairs Service, the local Private Sector Adaptations Service and Fife Works, which provides employment and training initiatives.



SUMMARY

The Customer

- Kingdom Housing Association
- Charity working across East Central Scotland
- Providing affordable housing

The Challenge

- Refresh thin client desktops
- Improve user experience
- Minimise management costs

The Solution

- Citrix XenApp
- IGEL UD6 thin clients
- IGEL Universal Management Suite software

Key Benefits

- Improved user experience
- Smooth running multimedia
- Reduced costs and management time

Kingdom first deployed thin client devices in 1999 to all system users and had used various manufacturer's devices. A key objective to improve business continuity was met in May 2015 by implementing a new MPLS network and moving its server infrastructure and storage to a remote secure data centre. The ICT team then looked at meeting another key objective of improving the desktop experience for its 100 or so users spread across nine different office locations.

"We wanted to provide smooth and intuitive multimedia and internet services to our users at the desktop," explained Gary Haldane, Head of ICT at Kingdom Housing Association. "Our employees were using online and multimedia services such as YouTube more frequently for research and learning but had to move away from their desk to use these services in training rooms or on a laptop because their existing thin clients did not handle multimedia well. They were experiencing a lot of drag and buffering. We wanted to radically improve this user experience."

The organisation decided to test a range of leading mid-level thin clients. IGEL Technology came out on top but the decision to buy was also swayed by other factors, explained Gary. "Many of the other leading thin client manufacturers offer a wide range of different hardware and software. We chose IGEL Technology because they focus their business on thin client. We knew we would get better support from a dedicated provider and that has proven to be the case."

Kingdom chose the IGEL UD6 thin client and has now deployed over 160 across the organisation. IGEL's most powerful hardware series, the UD6 sets a new standard in thin client computing. With its fast quadcore processor and flexible expansion capability, the UD6 is the device of choice for the most demanding uses including video playback in full HD, computer-aided design (CAD) or 3D applications.

The IGEL devices connect to virtual servers at the remote data centre using Citrix XenApp 7.6 over a MPLS network. The ICT team has created one desktop image, which includes Microsoft Office applications; Orchard's housing systems and some other specialist applications. Access to applications is governed by permissions run through Microsoft Active Directory.

The ICT team used the IGEL Universal Management Suite (UMS) software, which comes included with every device, to set up and configure the desktops. The software is a simple to use tool, which can have clients up and running in minutes. Intuitive to use, secure and scalable up to 100,000 thin clients, the IGEL UMS drastically reduces management time for IT administrators.

"The roll-out took just a few days," said Gary. "We pre-configured and then it was simply a case of plugging in the devices and using the UMS. Using the same software, the devices can be centrally managed for any updates. We have used other thin client management software in the past and they were terrible to use but this software couldn't be easier."

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In the first 6 months, Gary added that there had been very minimal desktop management required for his small ICT team with no device failures or helpdesk calls and with the IGEL thin clients coming with a five year warranty, Gary said he expected IGEL thin clients to be on the desktops for many trouble-free years.

"Users have been pleased with the new IGEL devices," reported Gary. "They are so much faster than the previous thin clients and they no longer have to leave their desks to view video or training materials."

"And now that Kingdom has a quality network infrastructure and desktops, the ICT team is not spending time firefighting and is concentrating on delivering strategic objectives and further business improvements through optimizing technology."