

CWM TAF UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD

When Cwm Taf University Health Board tested IGEL thin clients it saw the opportunity to radically reduce management time and energy costs by using thin clients.



Cwm Taf University Health Board mainly covers the local authority areas of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff. It is the second most densely populated health board in Wales, covering 3% of the landmass of Wales with approximately 289,400 people.



FEATURE QUOTE

“The IGEL devices are smaller, faster to deploy, use less energy and are easier to use than the old PCs.”

John Probert - Senior Server Manager

SUMMARY

The Costumer

- Cwm Taf University Health Board
- Serving almost 290,000 in Wales
- Employs more than 8,000 staff

The Challenge

- Improve management time
- Reduce costs
- Standardise desktop offering

The Solution

- IGEL UD3 & UD5 LX
- IGEL Universal Management Suite software
- Wireless connected IGEL thin clients on medical carts

Key Benefits

- Reduced management time
- Reduced electricity bills
- Improved data security

Cwm Taf Health Board was established on 1 October 2009, following the integration of the former Cwm Taf NHS Trust, Merthyr Tydfil Local Health Board and Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Health Board. It was awarded university health board status in December 2013. Its vision is to 'create altogether healthier communities' by aiming to prevent ill health, protect good health and promote better health' through working with partners to provide services as locally as possible and reducing the need for hospital inpatient care wherever feasible. Acute, intermediate, community and mental health services are delivered across a network of community clinics, health centres and community hospitals supported by two district general hospitals.

Cwm Taf has an annual budget of around £650m and employs more than 8,000 staff. As a result of the significant investment that has taken place over the last few years the health board's estate is now the most modern in Wales. Key schemes have included the building and opening of a new 108-bed community hospital and Keir Hardie University Health Park, in Merthyr Tydfil - Wales' largest integrated health and social care park.

Ageing desktops triggered the search

With ageing PCs being used as dumb terminals throughout the organisation, the ICT team at Cwm Taf University Health Board was on the lookout for a new desktop solution which would meet the wide-ranging needs of its medical and administration professionals.

"We had oscillated between buying new and second hand PCs to use as Citrix terminals but had never been entirely satisfied with this solution," said John Probert, senior server manager.

"In places like the hospital theatres, the PCs were just too bulky and we required a more integrated solution to match the flat screen displays we were installing throughout the organisation." When the team saw an IGEL thin client demonstration, they realised they may have found a solution to their needs.

"We were impressed with the IGEL devices because of their small footprint and low energy use," John said. **"The IGEL units use 30W of power compared to our old PCs which were using 300W. On top of this, the IGEL Universal Management Suite software was very persuasive. It makes the devices so simple to deploy and manage."**

Today, the health board has 2,500 IGEL thin clients in use, out of a total of 4,500 desktops and is slowly moving across to the thin clients as old PCs are replaced.

"The IGEL units are now everywhere," said John. **"We have them in the laboratories, theatres, accident and emergency and all the clinical areas. The administration staff also use them in the offices and for database access. Some are running dual-screens for some of the large spreadsheet applications, such as the nursing rostering system."**

Today, the health board has IGEL UD3 and UD5 Linux devices running a Windows 2008 desktop connected by Citrix XenApp 6 (soon to be upgraded to Citrix XenApp 6.5). There are 120 virtualised Citrix servers, using Citrix XenServer as the hypervisor.

"The virtualization has helped us go from a ratio of approximately 30 physical servers to just four and this has also had a massive positive impact on the space and cooling we need, as well as the energy savings," said John.

Matt Palmer, head of server management, added: **"This increase of server virtualisation has helped Cwm Taf University Health Board in energy cost savings as we are now running 63% of our 400 server estate through hypervisor servers."**



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IGELs also used for wireless medical carts

As well as the desktops, the hospitals are also using wireless connected IGEL thin clients on medical carts on the wards. They connect to the network using a dongle via the USB port and they are used by medical staff for viewing results and checking records. John says the IGEL devices are much better designed for the job than the old PCs because they are smaller and draw much less power from the battery system, meaning they can work much longer between recharges.

And when the health board built new hospitals and facilities, John said the fast deployment of the IGEL devices was a real benefit. **“The moment you switch the IGEL on, it is there and ready to go,”** he added.

“Initially there was some scepticism from staff about switching to the thin client devices but they quickly came around because of the small size, the fact that they boot very quickly and don’t need constant virus upgrades and anti-malware updates.”

“Another benefit is that we do not suffer from thefts, as the devices are useless when taken off the network. We also do not have any patient data issues, as information cannot be stored locally on the device.”

Possible video conferencing and voice recognition benefits

Moving forward, the ICT team is looking at the possibility of introducing video conferencing and speech recognition recording using the IGEL devices and capabilities within the IGEL firmware.

“We have found our long-term desktop solution and no longer need to keep looking,” concluded John. **“The IGEL devices are smaller, faster to deploy, use less energy and are easier to use than the old PCs. We manage the infrastructure with the resources of just four staff who are able to support the IGEL clients via the Universal Management Suite console as a small part of their job. We have noticed a significant drop in our power use and have avoided issues like the end-of-life support for Microsoft Windows XP, which many other organisations are now having to grapple with.”**



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