CASE STUDY

Up and running everywhere within 90 seconds

With an organisation-wide rollout of IGEL thin clients, the Municipal Council of Smallingerland is taking the final step in achieving uninterrupted workplace-independent working: fast, sustainable and cost-efficient.

GEMEENTE SMALLINGERLAND

Up and running from every location within 1.5 minutes

The Municipal Council in the Friesian town of Smallingerland wants to work increasingly work-place-independently. For this reason, it switched to Server-Based Computing (SBC). From the business applications to specific municipal software for taxes or landscaping, for example: all three hundred applications were centralised and made remotely accessible. The council initially used its existing PCs as workstations, but wanted to take it a step further with a new workplace. Thin clients seemed to be the ideal solution, but which ones? Managing these thin clients also needed to be effortless.

Workplace-independent working has already become commonplace at Smallingerland municipal council. "Since we switched to a server-based environment using Citrix, employees can log into our central systems everywhere. It doesn't matter whether they are in the town hall in Drachten or at one of our other locations. Half of our people also have access from home to the server, and that number is growing all the time. The only thing they need is a PC or laptop and the token," explains Doeke Faber, system administrator at the council.

With the introduction of new workstations, Smallingerland wanted to further optimise its IT environment. "We initially opted to use our old Windows PCs as clients," explains Faber. "However, one major disadvantage of this was that users first had to start Windows and then Citrix, and had to login separately on both systems. This took a lot of time, also from an emotional point of view. The system stability could also be improved – there were regular problems with the connection, for example. We had to go to the PCs to resolve these."

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> Doeke Faber

Convincing management tool

Faber knew from experience that thin clients would be a suitable solution for the new structuring of the workplaces. "We did not need any heavy workstations with all the bells and whistles, because all our applications, large and small, run centrally. The most important aspect for us is that we can offer our users quick, certain and easy access to their applications, and that we can manage the environment efficiently and simply." Faber in any event wanted thin clients with Linux as operating system, because these are easy to manage and start up quickly. "Of course, they also had to be fully compatible with Citrix, offer the option of connecting two high-resolution monitors and have the option to work with USBs. But the management tool, in particular, had to be convincing."

By far the best solution

In view of the large number of thin clients on the market, Faber looked for an independent party to advise him about the most suitable solution for the council. "We found the Thinclientspecialist online. Marc Terveer of the company selected three thin clients from various suppliers, and visited us to present them." The IGEL solution not only met the requirements of Smallingerland in terms of hardware specifications, but with its Universal Management Suite (UMS) it also offered the best management tool by far. "IGEL's UMS really stuck out, both in terms of design and functionality," says Faber. "This applies, for example, to being able to test and roll out firmware centrally in one go, rather than walking around with a USB stick, remotely taking over the use of a client or the opportunity of supporting Windows clients alongside Linux clients. That last aspect is ideal, because we still have several users of specific Windows applications. Another advantage is the support for SQL, so that you can link a database with

all management information and user settings to the UMS, and it can easily be included in the backup."

Minimum power consumption

Smallingerland opted for the IGEL UD3. The latest version of this thin client turned out to be even better for the council than was originally thought. "We had extensively tested the IGEL UD3 and were just about to place the order when Thinclientspecialist informed us that the new version was on its way," explains Faber. "This not only had a faster processor, but had an even lower power consumption than its predecessor: 6 Watts in use and 0.5 Watts in standby mode. Our PCs running Windows XP used to consume around 300 Watts, which is a huge difference! We then opted for this new version." IGEL is unique in terms of sustainability, he argues. "Even the packaging of the thin clients is sustainable: there are ten devices in one box, without all sorts of surplus filling. So when the systems are rolled out, you don't have boxes everywhere and you are not faced with large quantities of waste. Sustainability is an important theme in our organisation."

Faster working, easier management

The council now has 377 IGEL UD3 thin clients in use. Thinclientspecialist also played an important role in the implementation. "They supported us in all sorts of ways," says Faber, "with test models and consultancy about the automated rollout of firmware as practical support. They also helped us give each thin client a name and number, to make life easier for us." Everyone in the organisation is very satisfied with the thin clients, starting with Faber himself. "The administrative burden is very low. We no longer have any connection problems, but if something does go wrong, we can resolve it remotely with the UMS. The rollout of firmware updates or fixes throughout the organisation can also take place very quickly, and we don't need to leave the office for this." The users are very happy that their workstations now start up so quickly. "Instead of 4.5 minutes, they can now get started in less than 90 seconds," says Faber. "From standby mode, that goes down even further, to 30 seconds." Smallingerland is now considering deploying even more thin clients. "We have computers in the IT department at which external parties, such as software suppliers, can login," explains Faber. "We also want to use thin clients for this. And we are also thinking about converting a number of laptops to thin clients."

The Customer

○ Friesian Municipal Council of Smallingerland
○ Drachten and a number of surrounding villages
○ 6 locations
○ Approximately 55,000 inhabitants
○ More than 400 employees

The challenge

○ Transition to Server-Based Computing (SBC)
○ Working workplace independently
○ Linux and Windows in a single environment
○ Connecting two monitors
○ Quick and easy start-up, connection, management

The solution

○ IGEL UD3 Universal Desktop Thin Client

The results

○ Problem-free working anywhere
○ Using both Linux and Windows
○ Logging in three times more quickly: from 4.5 minutes to 1.5 minutes
○ Lower administrative burden: no more connection problems and everything remote
○ Reduction of power consumption from 300 Watts to 6 Watts

simple   smart   secure

ENDPOINT MANAGEMENT

Revolutionary in its
Simplicity