

ARCADIA GROUP LIMITED

IGEL Made to Measure for Fast Moving Fashion Business

Arcadia

Arcadia Group is the UK's largest privately owned clothing retailer with more than 2,500 outlets for seven of the high street's best-known fashion brands: Burton, Dorothy Perkins, Evans, Miss Selfridge, Topman, Topshop and Wal-lis. These brands also operate in over 30 countries across Europe, the Far East and Middle East via 420 international franchise stores.



FEATURE QUOTE

“ We have built a strong business relationship with IGEL. They are responsive to our needs, understand our business objectives and are flexible in their approach – in summary, an excellent company to do business with.”

Laurence Glover - Technical Services Manager

SUMMARY

The Costumer

- The UK's largest privately-owned clothing retailer
- Operating 2,500 outlets in the UK, US, Far East and Middle East
- With seven of the high street's best known fashion brands, including Topshop

The Challenge

- A more cost effective desktop solution
- Able to be managed centrally
- Fast and flexible to rapidly changing demands

The Solution

- A range of IGEL Linux and Windows Embedded Universal Desktops to meet different demands
- The IGEL Universal Management Suite to centrally manage
- Easy to manage and reliable to run

High demand fashion retailer requires flexible desktop infrastructure

To be a long-term success in the world of High Street fashion, the Arcadia Group has had to be fast and flexible in its response to the changing demands of consumers. As a result, its requirements of its IT infrastructure are equally demanding.

So when Arcadia decided to re-evaluate the thin clients the business was using in its server-based computing environment the technology team realised they needed both the right product and the right product manufacturer to meet future requirements.

“We moved to a server-based computing environment more than 6 years ago to give us better financial and operational control over our desktop infrastructure but the current thin clients were not meeting all our needs and we still had a mixed desktop environment with thin clients, PCs and laptops,” said Laurence Glover, Arcadia’s Technical Services Manager.

Arcadia’s technical team undertook an evaluation of all the leading thin client manufacturers looking closely at cost, performance, management capabilities and flexibility. “Igel came out top in all criteria and we haven’t looked back since,” said Laurence.

Today, the Arcadia Group has more than 2,500 IGEL thin clients throughout its 3,300 desktops in its UK head office locations, Regional offices, Distribution Centres and international locations including its high profile New York Topshop store.

“As a leading fashion retailer we have to be able to rapidly respond to fast changing requirements and it is important that our thin client manufacturer and reseller are able to respond at the same pace.” explained Laurence.

Today, the Arcadia Group has a wide range of Linux and Windows Embedded IGEL devices from the integrated screen UD 9 device, ideal for use in stores or confined space areas; through to the workhorse UD3, ideal for back office or distribution centre operations.

The thin clients run in a Citrix environment, which comprises of IBM Bladecenter HS21 servers, virtualized using Citrix XenServer 5.6. The base operating system is Microsoft Windows 2003 with Citrix XenApp 5. In the near future this will be upgraded to Microsoft Windows 2008 R2 and XenApp 6. **“The flexibility of the IGEL devices is such an important factor,”** explained Laurence. **“A perfect example is when we decided to roll-out a personal shopping service area in some of our high profile stores. We quickly needed a networked device in all of these areas so that staff could make customer appointments, order items and record details. With an IGEL device we were able to have the service up and running in no time at all.”**

One of the key benefits of the IGEL roll-out has been the IGEL Universal Management Suite (UMS) software which comes free with every device. The UMS can be used to set-up, maintain and upgrade all the IGEL thin clients from a central location. It is a simple to use management tool which can have thin 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.

Paul Eaton-Watts, Arcadia Group’s Senior Technical Specialist, explains that there are a number of very valuable functions delivered by the UMS. **“We now have a central point of management with the terminals automatically picking up new configurations when they reboot. We can also have multiple configurations for different business needs, for example in the stores and the head office. Firmware upgrades are now much**



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easier to push out. We can use the UMS to establish buddy updates to spread the load across the network by allowing some thin client devices to act as firmware upgrade servers for other clients rather than having to come back to a central network location. Finally, there are no additional costs for the management software or when feature upgrades are introduced.”

And when there is a problem – which are few and far between because the IGEL thin clients have no moving parts and retain no data – the fix can be fast and efficient. Cathy Sykes, Support Manager for Arcadia’s Service Desk, said: **“We experience very few hardware issues with the IGELs but when we do support is very easy. A few checks by the user often resolves the issue but if a replacement IGEL is required it can be up and running very quickly.”**

A technology partnership that works

Laurence believes that the relationship his team has with IGEL has been essential to the success of the roll-out. **“We have built a strong business relationship with IGEL. They are responsive to our needs, understand our business objectives and are flexible in their approach – in summary, an excellent company to do business with.”**

Expanding the IGEL desktops

In the future, Laurence said that the company would continue to expand the roll-out of the IGEL thin clients on the desktops, with the next step being a planned thin client desktop migration for 800 users at the BHS store chain.



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