

MARKERSTUDY GROUP SAVES £1 MILLION ON HARDWARE USING IGEL OS TO SUPPORT ITS M & A GROWTH STRATEGY AND DELIVER A 'HYBRID' FUTURE OF OFFICE AND HOME WORKING



Markerstudy Group has quickly, successfully and cost-effectively introduced working from home and supported its M&A growth strategy by capitalizing on its transition to Citrix Cloud Services and a EUC solution which comprises over 3,000 IGEL OS powered endpoints.

This business-critical Citrix project was proposed and managed by IGEL partner, cloudDNA, working in close collaboration with Markerstudy's own internal infrastructure team.

Headquartered in Kent, Markerstudy Group is the UK's largest Managing General Agent and supports 1,000 broker partners and more than 3 million policy holders with a variety of insurance products.



” We've repurposed £1 million worth of hardware - that's over 1,000 devices - which we would otherwise have had to purchase. This extends the life of equipment, sweats assets longer and supports our environmental, social and governance agenda.”

- **Adam Miller**,
Group Head of IT, Markerstudy Group

THE CUSTOMER

- Markerstudy Group is the UK's 6th largest motor insurance provider and the largest Managing General Agent supporting 1,000 broker partners. It has more than 3 million policy holders with a variety of insurance products.
- The group also owns other related firms such as Auto Windscreens and Vision Vehicle Solutions - a vehicle hire service for motorists involved in accidents.

THE CHALLENGE

- In light of the Coronavirus pandemic, Markerstudy had to get over 3,000 staff working from home quickly so that all business areas could continue working without interruption.
- The business has a strategy to grow by acquisition. When Covid struck in 2020, Markerstudy was in the process of buying the Co-op Insurance's underwriting business. It also purchased Brightside Insurance in 2021. The group needed a solution that could cater for the on-boarding of new staff from the firms it has acquired irrespective of whether they work from home, at head office or other company locations.

THE SOLUTION

- IGEL OS
- IGEL Cloud Gateway
- IGEL Universal Management Suite (UMS)
- Citrix Cloud Services

THE BENEFITS

- IGEL OS has rationalized and standardized EUC within Markerstudy Group
- Work from home delivered using Citrix Cloud services which offers multi factor authentication, easier management and simple login for staff
- IGEL UMS provides a management platform that provides a single view across the whole endpoint estate and allows updates and profiles to be pushed to all devices
- IGEL Cloud Gateway secures the communication between endpoints outside the corporate network and the IGEL management platform
- £1 million saved on hardware as equipment is recycled - supports Markerstudy's environmental, social and governance agenda

The business has grown organically and by acquisition. In 2020, it purchased the Co-op's insurance underwriting business making it the UK's 6th largest motor insurance provider and, in April 2021, it acquired Brightside Insurance. In addition, the group owns a number of other related firms such as Auto Windscreens and Vision Vehicle Solutions – a vehicle hire service for motorists involved in accidents.

Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops had been used by Markerstudy for some years running on premise in its two datacentres. Ian Richardson, infrastructure team leader, explains, "In response to COVID-19, we transitioned to Citrix Cloud Services and moved everyone onto it. This meant literally within two weeks, staff were working normally supporting customers from home."

The features within Citrix Cloud Services have been central to how this was done so fast. First, Multi-Factor Authentication using virtual tokens is bundled with the Citrix Cloud Services subscription so system security is guaranteed when staff connect to their virtual desktops from home. This avoided the extra expense of having to buy a third party security solution costing around £100 annually per user.

Second, the log in process is easy given Citrix provides a dedicated URL and portal page where staff simply input their username, password and password token to gain access to their desktops. They then use Microsoft Office and various underwriting platforms to serve customers.

Third, the access layer is managed as part of the Citrix Cloud Service which saves internal IT staff involvement, with workloads provisioned from both its datacentres and in the cloud. This removes considerable management overhead compared to an on-premise solution as Markerstudy doesn't have to worry about updates, patching or access security.

IGEL OS POWERED ENDPOINTS KEY TO EUC SUCCESS AT HOME

The other key component to deliver the home working transition has been Markerstudy's decision to standardize on IGEL OS and convert laptops, desktops and HP thin clients into 'locked down' centrally controlled devices. Today, 85% of users have an IGEL-Citrix solution, with 3,000 IGEL OS licences purchased, along with IGEL Cloud Gateway which connects and manages the home-based devices outside the corporate network. IGEL's Universal Management Suite (UMS) is also used to provide a single window into the whole environment allowing simplified management, along with remote shadowing for staff. As part of its remit, cloudDNA supports the whole IGEL estate.

The use of IGEL OS rationalizes end-user computing for Markerstudy. Richardson adds, "With Covid, we told colleagues to take their computers home, plug them in, connect them to the Internet and they will work. They did."



THE COMBINATION OF CITRIX CLOUD SERVICES AND IGEL OS DELIVERS A WIDE RANGE OF OTHER BENEFITS:

- The quick onboarding of employees as Citrix-IGEL OS endpoints can be preconfigured in advance. For example, around 300 staff joining from Brightside will have their devices managed in this way.
- The ability to save money by recycling disparate hardware from companies acquired like Co-op and Brightside as IGEL OS runs on any x86 64-bit device. £1 million has been saved so far.
- The rationalization and downsizing of office space given many people now work from home.
- The simplification of software licensing for the business which again saves money. Today, Markerstudy requires licenses from just Citrix, IGEL and Microsoft – for Office 365 - rather than the myriad of software agreements associated with a traditional 'thick client' environment.
- The capacity to meet Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation standards where new patches must be implemented within 14 days. IGEL UMS in combination with Cloud Gateway enables this process to be simplified as updates are literally 'pushed' out to all endpoints.
- The ability to underpin the introduction of video calling with customers given IGEL OS supports Citrix HDX – the protocol which enables HD audio and video to be streamed over a network.
- The improvement of staff retention rates as people realize a better work-life balance through remote working.

Looking to the future, Markerstudy is transitioning the company to become very much a 'hybrid' organization where working from both the office and home is standard. The combination of Citrix Cloud Services and IGEL facilitates this. Access is seamless and the desktop is the same wherever an individual happens to be which boosts end-user adoption and ultimately productivity.

