Bolton NHS Foundation Trust

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NHS Foundation Trust

Profile:

Challenged to:

- Implement VDI and migrate to Windows 7 with minimal disruption to clinical staff
- Ensure the availability of applications for more than 4,000 clinical staff anywhere on any device
- Allow IT staff to update and support a robust, mobile virtual desktop environment across more than 30 sites
- Protect information security and patient safety

Location:

Bolton, United Kingdom

Industry:

Healthcare

Website:

www.boltonft.nhs.uk/

Solutions:

- Ivanti® User Workspace Manager

Benefits:

- Enabled a phased rollout of Windows 7 across thousands of desktops
- Decreased logon times from several minutes to 15 seconds in conjunction with other technologies
- Reduced GPOs by 90 percent
- Significantly reduced patch failure and exposure to security vulnerabilities
- Fixed application printing issues for roaming clinical staff

Making Ivanti the Linchpin of Its Virtual Desktop Infrastructure

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, a UK-based integrated care organization, offers patient care in the community at more than 20 health centers and clinics, including the Royal Bolton Hospital. With a staff of over 4,000 and more than 600 beds, The Trust accommodates more than 100,000 Accident and Emergency attendances and 750,000 community attendances a year.

From an IT perspective, The Trust exceeds the complexity of many business environments. It supports nearly 300 clinical applications, all of which involve potential risk in terms of patient care. That means zero tolerance for data loss or application downtime. Moreover, 40-plus community sites as well as 4,000 users at the hospital depend on The Trust's IT infrastructure. "The community sites needed a lot of help," notes Bolton NHS Foundation Trust CIO, Rachel Dunscombe. "Their virtualized desktops were more than a decade old. And we also inherited a lot of old desktop equipment. Our first order of business was to bring them into the modern world, primarily VDI and Windows 7, so that clinicians could have a consistent experience no matter where they accessed patient information."

"But there was no way we could do a Big Bang roll out of Windows 7. The disruption would have potentially impacted patient care," continues Brett Walmsley, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust's CTO. "So, we needed something that would allow users to move between desktops as easily as possible while we gradually went through the migration from XP to Windows 7."

Ivanti – The Only Solution for the Job

Initially, The Trust chose Ivanti only for its value in simplifying and streamlining the migration to Windows 7. "Because we'd been working with Ivanti User Workspace Manager to manage user profiles, we didn't have to research the market and do a proof of concept," explains Dunscombe. "We could prove that it could do the job."

Nevertheless, The Trust's IT team soon realized that Ivanti had much more to offer. "It did more than we expected," observes Walmsley. "In fact, we changed our five- and 10-year plans based on the functionality it could offer in supporting our deployment of the virtual desktop."

The Trust's new roadmap calls for a fully mobile, virtual desktop where every aspect of the environment will be streamed, with Ivanti binding all the elements together. "We want to have full desktop virtualization using Citrix XenDesktop 7.6 to do the desktop brokering and Microsoft App-V for application delivery," says Walmsley.

Adding Value to Microsoft App-V

The Trust uses Microsoft App-V to make applications available to users without installing them directly on users' PCs. But not all applications virtualize equally well. For example, The Trust's digital dictation application streams data and settings through a virtual desktop to virtual storage. "We've had trouble with the desktop application," Walmsley comments, "never mind putting it in a virtual environment. The way it stores voice and data must be fast and reliable. It can't be missing parts." With Ivanti, The Trust successfully virtualized the application, while improving logon speed and increasing functionality.

Likewise, Ivanti helped successfully virtualize the mobile pharmacy application. "With Ivanti, you can recognize different virtual desktop sessions and access points," adds Walmsley. "It recognizes a disconnected session. So when a clinician changes location, Ivanti can safely redirect the session settings, correctly remap printers, and eliminate any potential clinical issues."

Simplifying Patch Management

Before Ivanti, every Microsoft "patch Tuesday" brought days of frustration. Thirty percent of patches would fail on average, often requiring complete machine rebuilds. "We had two-and-a half to three thousand desktops spread over 40 sites, with different versions of everything," Walmsley recalls. "Plus a legacy virtualized server farm," Dunscombe adds. Now that The Trust has moved to highly standardized virtual desktops and applications, patching is fast and problem-free. Users still enjoy a personalized desktop experience, but IT inefficiencies were eliminated and the window of exposure to unpatched security vulnerabilities was greatly reduced.

Although one non-persistent desktop is the ideal, Walmsley realizes that there may be exceptions. "The idea is not to have one monolithic desktop, which leads to complexity," he muses. "But, if something can't be virtualized, it will have to go on the desktop where Ivanti can control access and configuration settings."

Right now, only two or three out of 40 applications fit in that category. "Everything else gets streamed in," Walmsley says. "Virtualization reduces the impact of the updates. Now they're nearly instantaneous."

"We couldn't have done it without Ivanti. End of story!"

— Brett Walmsley
CTO, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust

"Clinicians get the information they need faster, which reduces clinical risk. It helps us deliver better, faster support. We love it. And we know there's much more we can do with Ivanti."

— Rachel Dunscombe
CIO, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust

Avoiding the "Nightmare"

The Trust's use of Ivanti went far beyond its Windows 7 migration; Ivanti made that initiative much more manageable and cost effective. "We couldn't have done it without Ivanti. End of story!" emphasizes Walmsley. Notes Rachel Dunscombe, "To do it as a Big Bang would have required at least 30 percent more in terms of staff. Plus, it would have been too risky and too costly with potential impacts on patient safety and clinical staff productivity, which was a non-starter for us."

From impairing the mobility and productivity of clinicians to isolating machines between clinics and health centers depending on the stage of the migration, it would have been as Walmsley sums up, "a nightmare."

Across the board, the deployment of Ivanti has been a success. "It's allowed us to deliver a much more personalized experience to each user, while simplifying policy and application management," concludes Dunscombe. "Clinicians get the information they need faster, which reduces clinical risk. It helps us deliver better, faster support. We love it. And we know there's much more we can do with Ivanti."

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