Municipal IT Teams Deploy Flexible, Efficient VDI, PCoIP Zero Client Desktops in Local Region

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JOOST POULISSEN
CONSULTANT, PROJECT MANAGER
ICT NML

ICT NML provides collaborative IT services that span the townships of Roermond, Venlo, and Weert in the Limburg province of the Netherlands. These three townships are home to approximately 200,000 residents. The Netherlands delegates many tasks to local governments, including land use planning, public housing, road and waste management, and social security.

AT A GLANCE

Situation
- IT services for municipal governments
- The Netherlands: Roermond, Venlo, and Weert
- 2,400 township employees

Challenges
- Budget and resource constraints
- Time consuming maintenance of traditional PCs in a VDI environment
- Breadth of use cases
- Keeping pace with governmental mandates and operational changes

Solution
- Virtual desktop infrastructure
- Teradici® PCoIP® All-in-One and Zero Clients

Results
- Time savings: Desktop maintenance has been reduced to almost zero
- Flexibility: Government employees can login from any desk, at any location
- Security: Critical data can be kept in the data center, while allowing authorized employees to access easily from the device of their choice

- Long-term efficiencies: IT staff [ICT NML] freed to develop specializations and focus on other projects
The relatively small IT team supporting three towns in the Netherlands has to keep up with a steady stream of new mandates and operational changes. Budget limitations, however, make it difficult to respond in a timely manner with new IT capabilities and services or to broaden IT skillsets at each site. When comparing ideas, all of the ICT NML teams agreed that desktop support was monopolizing time and resources that could be freed up to focus on innovative, high-value IT projects for employees and constituents or to develop specialized areas of IT expertise. Among the objectives IT identified were:

- **Simplified desktop maintenance.** Although a few towns had introduced virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), employees were still using traditional PCs. The fat clients required constant maintenance, and IT had to frequently reinstall an entire client to resolve user issues.

- **Improved user experience.** Any change at the desktop had to be positive for the employees, making it faster and easier to start up their applications. Also, there could be no degradations in performance.

- **Support for breadth of use cases.** An IT staff of 30 had to support more than 500 applications. These ranged from office productivity applications to engineering and graphics applications.

**With the first deployments of VMware View, ICT NML was introduced to the PCoIP protocol.** “We were impressed with the Teradici solution for displaying the user environment on a remote desktop,” said Joost Poulissen, consultant and project manager, ICT NML. “We researched Teradici further and learned about PCoIP Zero Clients. What we discovered was very exciting, especially when we saw the Teradici Management Console. We knew we could significantly reduce the hours required to manage desktops.”

The IT team purchased two dozen all-in-one PCoIP Zero Clients right away. Over the next year, as desktops were virtualized, they replaced PCs with zero clients. To date, a total of 2,000 employees in the region enjoy the new clients. Next year, the virtual desktop model will be expanded with 500 more zero clients.

“For the users, the performance on the PCoIP Zero Clients is slightly better than their previous fat clients,” said Poulissen. “And it is much easier for them to move to a new desk or location. They can login from anywhere. For IT, desktop maintenance has been reduced to almost zero. This has allowed us to shift IT staff – we can do other projects that are more important for our users.”

For example, ICT NML has been able to research and plan for the increasing employee mobility. “Everywhere, employees can get an Internet connection,” said Poulissen. “But we have a lot of critical data that we want to keep in the datacenter – not going out over the Internet, and not stored on a laptop or phone. With PCoIP, we will be able to give employees secure remote access options over 3G networks. Information can be displayed without any data being stored on the remote device. This will be a great advantage for us.”

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The successful IT collaboration and subsequent standardization on VDI and PCoIP Zero Clients continue to attract attention in the region. “The efficiencies we have gained definitely help us control costs,” said Poulissen. “Also, by standardizing on a flexible desktop model that can be duplicated in multiple locations, we make it possible for our regional IT teams to develop more specializations. In the IT world, we have to innovate faster and faster. Working together to find common solutions allows each local team to do more without increasing costs.”

As the new infrastructure model grows, ICT NML teams will continue to expand their skillsets. “Instead of an isolated IT staff of 12 in one town, we are part of a regional team of 30 IT experts supporting a common infrastructure model,” said Poulissen. “And this has allowed all us to free up more time for supporting end users. We know what they need, and now we can deliver the best possible IT services to them.”