



Linklaters Makes the Case for Centralised Deployment with Citrix

Linklaters, a global legal firm with 30 offices in 22 countries, specialises in advising the world's leading companies, financial institutions and governments on challenging transactions, such as multi-jurisdictional merger and acquisition (M&A) deals. The firm has 5,500 employees, including a team of 2,000 lawyers. Linklaters operates 16 core practice groups, ranging from asset finance, banking and the capital markets to litigation and arbitrations, taxes and trusts.

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SIMON THOMPSON

Director of Information Systems and Strategy, Linklaters

THE CHALLENGE: GLOBAL APPLICATION CONSOLIDATION AND DEPLOYMENT

Historically, Linklaters used a local client/server computing model where each office operated its own infrastructure. In addition, due to its global expansion and merger activities, Linklaters found itself managing a number of systems to meet its global and local finance requirements. These factors made it difficult to have one view of crucial financial and management information across different offices. Also, to comply with different jurisdictional legal requirements in each region, Linklaters must manage 673 discrete software applications. Linklaters wanted to replace the financial systems with one core enterprise-wide application from SAP, while maintaining the specialist software more efficiently. For improved application deployment and maintenance, the firm wanted to move to a centralised model.

Another challenge was giving its lawyers, who travel around the world, remote access to core business applications, such as Microsoft® Office 2003 and Outlook®, and the document management tool Documentum, as well as region-specific applications. Simon Thompson, Director of Information Systems and Strategy, Linklaters, said: “Our goal was to align IT with the business objectives, and ensure all of our employees could access core applications and specific software at any time, from any place in the world.”

CITRIX PRESENTATION SERVER FOR STANDARDISED APPLICATION DEPLOYMENT

Linklaters chose Citrix Presentation Server™, part of the Citrix Access Suite™, to deploy SAP R3, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Business Warehouse (BW), plus other business applications, to 6,000 desktops and 350 laptops globally. The legal firm centralised its local IT infrastructures in four data centres located in London and Colchester in the United Kingdom, Atlanta, Georgia in the United States, and Hong Kong. In each data centre, Citrix Presentation

Key Benefits

- Centralised IT administration reduces support costs
- One desktop view around the world enhances collaboration
- Single view of data supports decision-making and better client service
- Secure access protects confidential legal information
- Simple global application deployment

Applications Deployed

More than 673 applications, including:

- SAP R3 v4.6c, CRM v4.0, BW v3.5
- Microsoft® Office 2003
- Microsoft® Office Outlook®
- Documentum document management application

Server is installed on HP servers running Microsoft Windows Server™ 2003 software.

To give each regional office access to its required jurisdictional applications, Linklaters divides the servers in each data centre into two farms — first tier and second tier. The first-tier farm hosts the core applications for all users, while the second-tier farm is used for jurisdiction-specific applications. Centralising on two separate server farms eliminated the need to install and maintain these applications locally. Each office connects over a secure private network to its respective regional data centre.

SINGLE VIEW OF DATA SUPPORTS DECISION-MAKING

Linklaters must be able to provide clients with real-time information for all aspects of a deal, from work in progress, billing reporting and client relationship information, to legal advice and documentation. Linklaters uses SAP to manage all aspects of the client relationship and specific deals, and uses Documentum for the global storage and availability of all legal documentation. Citrix Presentation Server made it possible for Linklaters to deploy single instances of its SAP systems (R3, CRM and BW) and Documentum, supporting the firm's critical business objective of real-time information across its global offices.

Thompson said: "Using Citrix as a deployment mechanism for Documentum and SAP allowed us to have a single, real-time view of critical information from any location in the world. With Documentum, we have a single, up-to-date version of all legal documents. Similarly, if a client wants to know how much a transaction is costing, we have a real-time view of that figure because we have one view of SAP. This would not be possible without Citrix."

GLOBAL APPLICATION DEPLOYMENT CUTS SUPPORT COSTS

With the centralised management capabilities of Citrix Presentation Server, application deployment is fast and efficient, enabling the company to maintain a relatively small IT department, considering the number of employees. The percentage of IT staff to all 5,500 Linklaters staff is 3.4 percent, which is lower than that of competitors in the UK (4.0 percent) and the US (4.0-4.5 percent), and lower than the average for professional service firms (4.7 percent).

Thompson said: "Since installing Citrix, Linklaters has more than tripled in size yet the number of support staff within IT has increased at a much lower rate. Our ratio of IT employees to desktop users — and the resultant cost of support per employee — is massively reduced through the use of Citrix."

SECURE NETWORK ACCESS FOR LAWYERS

The confidential nature of information that legal firms are privy to means data security is critical. The Citrix Access Platform is secure by design and protects data across the organisation using many security features. First, application data remains on the server behind the corporate firewall, instead of exposed on the user device. Screen images and keystrokes sent over the Internet and other networks between server and client are encrypted by Secure Gateway for Citrix® Presentation Server to prevent theft or hacking. The Citrix infrastructure also supports the use of two-factor authentication solutions such as RSA SecureID tokens.

Networking Environment

- Citrix Presentation Server™ running on 144 HP DL360, HP DL580 and HP BL20p servers
- Microsoft® Windows® 2000 Server
- A Multi-Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) network connection throughout the organisation
- 6,000 HP desktop PCs and 800 Toshiba laptops

Thompson said: "Any leak in data could impact share prices, damage shareholder confidence or stop an M&A deal. Secure Gateway helps us to ensure the confidentiality of our clients' information, particularly finances. Citrix enables us to be much more efficient as an organisation, protect market-sensitive information, and continue to provide the high levels of representation the Linklaters name has become synonymous with."

ONE DESKTOP AROUND THE WORLD FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

Thompson said: "The most appreciated element of the Citrix solution is that it provides flexible access to information. Our employees can access Linklaters applications on any device with an Internet connection, whether it's at the office, at a client's premises, at home or in an airport. Thanks to Citrix, a lawyer in London who travels to see a client in Bangkok can access the same financial and collaborative content as they could obtain in the office. Remote access to common applications and documents using Citrix technology is crucial to our ability to provide excellent service for our clients."

About Citrix Presentation Server: Citrix Presentation Server™ has become the industry standard for providing secure on-demand access to client/server and desktop-based applications using virtualization, considered the best delivery method for these types of business applications. The applications actually run centrally on Presentation Server itself, which is located in a secure data centre, while appearing to run on a user's local, remote, or mobile computer. Presentation Server runs on virtually any platform, from Microsoft® Windows Server™ 2003 x64 Edition to Windows Server 2003, Windows® 2000 Server, and UNIX®.