

# Digital workspace boosts productivity at ADEQ

## Taking a user-first approach

### Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's digital workspace boosts productivity, and keeps data and applications secure

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) administers the state's environmental laws, works to prevent air, water, and land pollution, and ensures clean-up. Teams plan, issue permits, manage compliance, monitoring, and assessments, execute clean-ups, and undertake community outreach. It's a big job, and first-class tech is a must to tackle the mission.

"As you would expect, we support a highly mobile workforce," explained David Crowfoot, Infrastructure Architect and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO). "Employees use government-owned and personal devices, and increasingly, whether in the field or office, need access to cloud-based applications and data."

The team was challenged to keep the traditional desktop/laptop environment updated – costs were ballooning, and support needs kept growing. "Our IT staff was having a difficult time keeping up," said Crowfoot.

ADEQ team members also had challenges logging in through a standard virtual private network and manoeuvring through the complicated environment – and inconsistent experiences.

"We got a lot of complaints due to the impact on productivity and growing frustration levels, and knew we needed to provide easier, simpler, more reliable access to applications and data," said Kim Peterson, System Engineer.

The security team also recognized the need to modernize, as they had more users accessing data and applications from more places and on more devices – introducing new vulnerabilities. "ADEQ needed to improve control and visibility over our environment," said Crowfoot. "Our goal was to provide an optimal computing experience for our users, while we ensure our systems were continuously monitored and upgraded."



#### Industry

Public Sector

#### Location

USA

#### Citrix products

- Citrix Workspace
- Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops

#### Key Benefits

- Increased the IT team's control over the environment, reducing security risks
- Provided data and application access during a 17-hour power outage with zero productivity loss
- Supports ADEQ's efforts to move to the cloud
- Enables employees to access applications, desktops, and data through a single sign-on
- Continuously monitors virtual desktops

## Less complex equals more productive

After evaluating the options, ADEQ implemented a virtual application and desktop deployment – the Citrix Workspace – where employees can access applications, desktops, and data (on premise or cloud-based) through a single sign-on.

“Today, our users click on two icons and they are at their desktop,” said Crowfoot. “The complexity is greatly reduced.

“Improving the end-user experience was very important to us,” said Crowfoot. “Workspace lets us deliver a more consistent experience for employees working across different devices, networks, and in different locations.”

## Reducing security risks

Importantly, Workspace provided the IT team with more control over the environment, reducing security risks. “We can execute updates quickly and easily with centralized app management,” said Crowfoot, adding, “this reduces our security vulnerabilities.” The team can establish governance processes and contextual-based access and alerts that notify IT of unusual or risky behavior (for example, excessive file downloads).

“A big part of IT security is simply knowing what’s in your environment,” said Crowfoot. “Unfortunately, for many organizations, this is much harder than it sounds, especially as the environment can change day to day with employees downloading files, applications, etc. Our system resets every morning, wiping any unwanted downloads from the desktop, eliminating associated security risks.”

“Today, we know our virtual desktops are continuously monitored and upgraded to ensure a smooth environment and consistent experience for our users,” he added.

“We use a secure workspace not to stop our teams from doing things, but to make sure they can do what they need to do, without worrying about the behind-the-scenes problems that can arise when using PCs,” explained Crowfoot.

“Generally speaking, the more we can put into the VDI the better,” said Crowfoot. “It’s not necessarily always about cost, it’s also about efficiency – easier maintenance, fewer things to deal with at a patching level, and going forward – supporting our continued efforts to move to the cloud. The cloud’s not a goal, it’s a mandate.”

## Keeping the lights on through a 17-hour power outage

What happens to productivity when you have a 17-hour power outage? Usually, nothing good. But, in ADEQ’s case, when a large storm led to a day-long outage in the agency’s headquarters building, work continued uninterrupted.

The data center was up on backup power, but the building power was out, and 300+ employees had to work remotely at the same time. Team members logged in through the Workspace’s virtual desktop – everyone had access to the same applications and data they did in the office.

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Infrastructure Architect and  
Chief Information Security  
Officer (CISO)  
Arizona Department of  
Environmental Quality**

“We had zero productivity loss,” said Crowfoot. “Didn’t miss a beat. This was possible because we had consistent engagement with our users, a great design, and implemented the Workspace.”

#### Advice: engage early and often

Going forward, ADEQ will continue to refine the environment and enable teams to work from any location, on any device – securely.

“The biggest lesson learned is that it is vital to keep your environment and virtual desktop updated,” shared Peterson. She also stressed the importance of keeping up with training – webinars, team meetings, etc. – to ensure everyone stays informed and takes advantage of the tools the organization has deployed.

Crowfoot emphasized the importance of continuous collaboration with the user community.

“If you want to enhance the user experience and performance, you must stay in close contact with your users,” he said. “For everything we do, we engage early and often – and we listen. Our job as technologists is to find a solution to business needs. We know this – and that’s why we’ve been so successful.”

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**Infrastructure Architect and**  
**Chief Information Security**  
**Officer (CISO)**  
**Arizona Department of**  
**Environmental Quality**

#### Enterprise Sales

North America | 800-424-8749

Worldwide | +1 408-790-8000

#### Locations

Corporate Headquarters | 851 Cypress Creek Road, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309, United States

Silicon Valley | 4988 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara, CA 95054, United States

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