

Indiabulls

Citrix Helps Indiabulls Enhance Productivity and Security While Saving Costs Using VDI

Citrix VAD and ADC help Indiabulls manage the large volumes of end-user machines dispersed across 300 locations in the most efficient manner, enhancing productivity and security while bringing significant cost savings.



Indiabulls and Citrix

“Citrix has provided us at Indiabulls a stable platform that has centralized management of all our end-user machines, which has brought significant efficiencies around the key parameters of security and user experience while reducing cost and improving response times. Besides optimizing the whole management task for the IT teams, what has really been an eye-opener is the significant impact on the productivity of our employees.”

Pulkit Juneja | Project Lead – Datacenter/Infrastructure | Indiabulls

Founded in 1999, Indiabulls Group is a diversified financial services group operating in the areas of housing finance, consumer finance, real estate and wealth management. The group’s flagship company, Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited (IBHFL) is one of India’s leading housing finance companies. With a strong nationwide presence, IBHFL has serviced over 1 million customers and cumulatively disbursed loans of over ₹ 2.15 trillion.

Manual Process of Managing End-User Machines Marred With Inefficiencies

Indiabulls’ presence spans across 300+ branches besides the main offices in Gurgaon and Mumbai with plans to expand further as the business grows. These branch offices house majority of its over 15,000 strong workforce, including management, business and call centre employees and also run multiple Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) units.

Needless to say, the branch

offices are critical to the company’s operations. At the core of the branch offices’ smooth functioning are all the systems and applications that aid employees in their daily tasks, such as email, internet browsers, SAP, Microsoft Office, etc.

However, with a geographically dispersed workforce, managing each employee’s system, right from the Operating System (OS) to every single application was a challenge. Being manual, the tedious task of managing thousands of end-user machines across hundreds of locations was both inefficient and time consuming.

It required at least 3 - 4 IT staff members to accomplish a single request. The sheer volumes that required managing put a huge strain on the IT team besides leading to delays in machine allocations, running updates, installing applications and other service requests.

For instance, it would take more than two weeks for the IT team to make an employee fully functional post joining the company owing to the long time taken for the laptop/desktop allocation. Thus, significant time was wasted and productivity lost between on-boarding and the employee actually starting work.

According to Pulkit Juneja, Project Lead – Datacenter/Infrastructure, Indiabulls, the huge manpower requirement also added to the company’s overhead costs. Even then there was no monitoring platform to keep up with the huge volumes, which meant that a lot of the machines were left

unmanaged. Also, most of the hardware resources would be incorrectly configured for the specific user profiles, thus unable to meet the users' requirements.

The inefficiencies were further compounded by the workforce turnaround. Very often, on any given day a large number of employees are joining or leaving the company. Considering each system required to be configured specifically for each user with specific set of applications, it was challenging for the IT team to assign or revoke the system assets and manage the system's inventory in time for all the new joiners/leavers across all locations.

The inability to efficiently manage end-user machines also presented a security and compliance challenge for the company due to lack of control over OS/application patching and application version updates. With manual efforts it was also difficult to ensure that the company's standard security compliance requirements were met on all machines across all locations.

"The inefficiencies in allocating and managing machines was hampering business productivity and end user experience besides adversely impacting our security posture. We realized that it was impossible to manually keep up with managing of machines for our current 15,000 users across 300 locations without any omissions and slip-ups, let alone support any future expansion plans," explains Ravi Verma, Team Lead – Citrix at Indiabulls.

The company realized that in order to optimize its operations across all locations as well as

ensure security and compliance adherence, it had to move away from the traditional manual approach.

Holistic Solution from Citrix Offers the Right Fit for Indiabulls' Requirements

Indiabulls was looking for a solution that would enable centralized management of end-user machines to help the IT team manage enterprise applications/ OS as well as ensure applying standard security norms with minimal resources.

Another key requirement from the solution was flexibility around utilizing the hardware resources as per demand and usage by the end user's data space and application, which works as per dynamic space allocation to save resources. In other words, it was looking for a shared resources platform.

The company also required the solution to streamline and enhance application delivery to the end users and ensure security while accessing data and applications.

After evaluating various solutions in the market, the Indiabulls IT team found Citrix to be the right fit meeting all these requirements with security and user experience at the core.

According to Juneja, Citrix offered a holistic Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) solution comprising of Virtual Apps and Desktop (VAD) platform, Application Delivery Controller (ADC) along with Web Application Firewall capabilities to meet the company's comprehensive set of

requirements. With the solution meeting the key criteria of user data security besides being cost effective, Indiabulls found Citrix to be the right fit.

"The stability, security and rich user experience that Citrix offered was suitable for our highly demanding needs. Being a market leader and a mature solution, we found Citrix to be compatible with most of the applications and OS platforms. Citrix also fulfilled our major requirement of users session recording using Citrix integrated solution," he adds.

The company started with a multi-site implementation for 5000 users in mid 2018 and went live with the solution in February 2019. Today all the company's applications are running on Citrix VDI (Virtual Desktop Infrastructure), including finance related government applications with security token key. A key milestone for the company was the deployment of Citrix ADC in its highly complex network.

Centralized Control Eases Manageability While Improving Productivity and Security

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The solution has helped

in significantly improving manageability of end-user machines with central management and updates of applications, strong control on OS/application patching and licensing management and easy control of user profile and data. IT team is no longer required to individually patch and update each machine, saving time and resources which can be re-aligned to productive tasks. Lesser manpower requirements have also helped minimize costs. With the move to thin client/shared desktop additional costs have been saved on both end-user machines and third-party applications.

Indiabulls has several types of VDIs based on different hardware models for multiple users that are assigned based on the use case, providing the right fit to each user's requirements and improving productivity. This has also given flexibility in way of deploying and using the machines dynamically as per demand from anywhere, leading to better resource allocation.

Flexibility has been aptly complemented with greater control. There is granular control over user workspace on VDI using Citrix policy. The solution also provides for an easy way to control user session and applications besides control of user profile and data.

From productivity standpoint, the solution has helped on many counts. User productivity has improved with service issues getting resolved faster. Further, the whole process of allocating machines to the new joiners has been cut down to hours, making them quickly functional. According to Verma, with VDI the machines are ready with preconfigured applications, licenses and security norms and all that the user needs is the approval for VDI and thin client access to get started.

Indiabulls has particularly benefitted from the security and compliance requirements fulfilled by the Citrix solution. According to Verma, being a financial services company, security and regulatory compliance are of utmost importance and key to functioning.

The solution ensures that the company's security policy and compliance requirements are standardized, and that OS/application updates and patches are up to date on all machines across all office locations. This prevents the odd chance of even a single machine falling vulnerable to an outside attack owing to missing out on any patches or updates. The chances of that happening with the earlier manual processes were quite high considering the high volumes.

Measures are in place to control user data movement from VDI session as well as local and external

drive, ensuring protection from security threats and preventing leakage of confidential data. User session security is enabled using NetScaler. The solution also provides a secure way to access virtual apps and desktop over internal as well as external network. These various measures have helped in strengthening Indiabull's security posture while ensuring adherence to regulatory and compliance requirements.

Additional benefits experienced:

- User session encryption, security and reliability as opposed to local user session on the machine earlier.
- Managed printers on network leading to smoother printing solutions.
- More flexible and stable than existing VPN solution.
- Easier for auditing using single platform.
- Central user data repository with defined user quota and policy.
- Rich experience using Citrix HDX protocol which is highly optimized and reliable.

With the confidence gained in terms of security, flexibility and reliability in managing end-user machines, Indiabulls now plans to migrate the remaining employees onto VDI as well to maximize the benefits.



Enterprise Sales

North America | 800 424 8749
Worldwide | 954 267 3000

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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