

IGEL is relying on “Cloud First” in the workplace, with Citrix on Azure

IGEL Technology develops smart, secure endpoint solutions

Moving towards cloud-based workplaces

IGEL Technology has made a name for itself worldwide by offering innovative and powerful thin client solutions since 1989. Today, more than 17,000 customers use products from the Bremen manufacturer in their IT infrastructure. In the meantime, the focus has expanded to include more than just slim terminals. In the last few years, the company has developed from a hardware manufacturer to a software provider, and now is delivering complete solutions for software-defined endpoints. With IGEL OS as the next-generation edge operating system, IGEL facilitates secure access to virtual and cloud-based working environments.

“We’re convinced that in the medium term, there will be fewer and fewer software components running on local PCs. Instead, more and more applications and desktops will be accessed from public and private clouds,” says Tim-Oliver Felsen, IGEL Technology IT Manager. “It’s impossible to imagine the IT workstation of the future without cloud services. From the company’s perspective, it’s supported by increased user-friendliness, flexibility, cost benefits and more efficient management.”

Those are precisely the reasons why IGEL Technology has decided to move towards cloud-based workplaces from the early stages. The company previously had an external service provider which operated a Citrix infrastructure for the majority of its IT users. “Our goal was to take the next step and transform our virtual workplaces into real cloud workspaces,” explains Felsen.

From a virtual workplace to a cloud workspace

As a technology provider in the field of end-user computing, IGEL is especially well-acquainted with any number of virtualization and cloud solutions for the provision of desktops and applications. Why did the company ultimately decide to combine Citrix Cloud and Microsoft Azure when migrating its own infrastructure?

“On one hand, we’re convinced by the technological possibilities,” says the IT manager. “With HDX technology, Citrix offers sophisticated solutions for high-performance access to applications with intensive graphics - even under difficult network conditions.



Industry
Technology

Location
Bremen, Germany

Citrix products
• Citrix Workspace Service

Key Benefits

- Users benefit from greater flexibility and a better user experience
- Business applications can be provided faster and more reliably
- The effort and costs of operating digital workplaces are kept to a minimum
- Resource consumption in Azure can be automatically adjusted to meet actual needs

“We’ve also seen how well Citrix and Microsoft solutions complement each other in many projects. Citrix workloads can be run very efficiently and in a highly scalable way in Microsoft Azure - at the same time Citrix helps to optimize access to Office 365 applications such as Microsoft Teams. And lastly, the Citrix Cloud architecture concept was also a perfect match for our requirements.”

In the Citrix cloud model, Citrix is responsible for administration and operation of the management level and ensures that all core components are always the latest available. Citrix automatically installs updates and new functions, but customers can decide for themselves where they would like to operate the actual data and applications, either on the premises, in Azure or with another cloud provider. Hybrid and multi-cloud scenarios can also be flexibly mapped. “We can seamlessly integrate the existing SAP environment which continues to run in our data center, as well as integrating new SaaS offers and cloud services into the Citrix Workspace,” confirms Felsen.

SVA System Vertrieb Alexander GmbH has assisted IGEL in planning and implementing the cloud migration. The computer retailer has been a Citrix and Microsoft partner for many years and has contributed its comprehensive expertise to the two manufacturers’ solutions. Initially, the aims of the migration were defined in several workshops and then a detailed project timetable was drawn up. “SVA understood what our requirements were very quickly and then fully ensured the success of the project,” the IT manager says. “It only took about two months from making the first contact for business to become productive. During that time, our administrators and support staff were also being trained by SVA, and they learned a lot about the provision of Citrix Cloud services.”

Greater stability, comprehensive security and greater user performance

An important goal of cloud migration was to make improvements to the performance and availability of digital workplaces. That goal was achieved right from the start. For one thing, employees benefit from a highly reliable Azure platform including guaranteed uptime for the resources provided. For another, IGEL’s IT department now has new options and tools to give every user the best possible user experience.

Here, Citrix Workspace Environment Management (WEM) plays a key role. The solution uses machine-learning technology to analyze application and user behavior in real-time and intelligently adjust settings such as CPU performance and RAM. WEM also helped the IT department simplify profile management for cloud workspaces. “As a result, with this solution we were able to significantly speed up the registration process,” says Felsen. “Our employees can now more rapidly access all the applications in their digital workplace.”

From the IT manager’s perspective, Citrix’s core component management also contributes to the higher availability and greater stability of the environment. “Who’s in a better position to operate the basic infrastructure for Citrix Workspace better and more reliably than the manufacturer itself?” asks Felsen. “It’s a huge relief for us that we don’t have to deal with service administration like Citrix Gateway. Instead, we are free to completely focus our efforts on continuing to develop the digital workplace.”

“Citrix Workspace is a perfect fit for IGEL’s software-defined endpoint strategy. Just like Citrix, we are also striving to make working in digital workplaces as simple, smart and secure as possible.”

Tim-Oliver Felsen
IT Manager
IGEL Technology

No matter where IGEL staff connect to their digital workplace in Azure, access is always ensured by the Citrix Gateway Service. All communication between the endpoint and the cloud is encrypted and access to sensitive applications and data is also secured by Azure's multifactor authentication. IGEL can use Citrix Access Control to control access rights on a granular basis - depending on the context.

And, to complete the firm's security coverage, "We're using Citrix Endpoint on our iPhones and iPads. It gives us secure email and access to internal sites from those devices."

How Citrix Workspace reduces the burden on IT and the budget

Switching to Citrix Workspace in Microsoft Azure meant that IGEL gained full transparency in terms of the running costs for its digital workplaces. The company doesn't have to plan regular investments for more powerful servers, nor does it have to employ an external service provider for infrastructure administration and operation. Basic expenses for digital workplaces are covered by Citrix Workspace subscription fees and the cost of resource consumption in Azure.

IGEL can also cut costs with the new auto scale function from Citrix. This enables the IT performance provided in Azure to be adapted even more precisely to actual needs. Within a series of defined rules, IGEL can do things like increase the number of virtual machines in the morning and shut them down automatically at night. In addition, the performance of the environment can be dynamically scaled with auto scale as soon as certain load limits are exceeded. "This means that we are able to prevent both costly oversizing of capacities and under-sizing at the expense of user productivity," says Felsen. "What we really like is that the auto scale function allows us to see how much we've already saved at a glance."

From the IT manager's perspective, the opportunities presented by Citrix Workspace are far from exhausted. Among other things, IGEL wants to take a closer look at the options Citrix Analytics can offer and start gaining its first experiences with workspace intelligence soon. "We want to make day-to-day life even easier for users with intelligent functions and automated workflows. Citrix Workspace is a perfect fit for IGEL's software-defined endpoint strategy. Just like Citrix, we are also striving to make working in digital workplaces as simple, smart and secure as possible."

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