

# ODOT Keeps a mobile workforce on the move

Connecting with any device, to any app, over any network

## The business problem

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is responsible for maintaining one of the nation's largest transportation systems, with infrastructure assets valued at more than \$116B. Assets include 8,000+ lane miles, the second highest number of bridges of any state, and more than 680,000 additional assets beyond pavement and bridges – including waterways, public aviation facilities, and rail lines.

More tonnage is moved through Ohio's waterways than through the Panama Canal; and the state ranks third in the nation in terms of active rail lines.

ODOT keeps all these assets in good condition to keep citizens safe, enhance travel, and advance economic development – obviously a mobile mission in more ways than one.

Starting years ago, ODOT wanted to improve remote access to applications for their teams, who deliver a broad range of services from snow and ice removal, to annual construction programs, to highway maintenance operations. The existing Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) was slow – frustrating employees and impacting productivity.

Employees use a range of endpoints as diverse as their roles – iOS and Android devices in the field, thin clients in training rooms, engineering-grade laptops, and traditional desktops. And, due to the large number of construction projects involving third-party construction firms, ODOT needs to support hardware agnostic delivery platforms.

ODOT was also receiving more and more requests for new mobile applications – that duplicated existing on-premises resources. The department needed to meet the needs of its highly mobile workforce efficiently, without duplicating efforts, and needed new options.



## Industry

Public Sector

## Location

USA

## Citrix products

- Citrix Workspace

## Key Benefits

- Maintained efficiency and productivity on any device, over any network
- Made ODOT more adaptive to onboard more people and use newer types of technologies
- Delivered a seamless user experience with Single Sign-On and on-demand access to applications and data
- Improved support and security for its third party contractors
- Enabled ~1,800 employees to work productively from home during COVID-19

## Any application, on any device, over any network

“Roadway construction crews and bridge inspectors need to access critical applications and files to collaborate across teams in real time and ensure the safety of Ohio’s eight million registered drivers annually,” explains Charles Ash, Chief Information Officer, ODOT.

Ash emphasized they wanted a hardware agnostic environment. “The device our users are comfortable solving problems with is the device we want them to use – wherever and whenever,” said Ash.

“Our goal was any application, on any device, anywhere in the state, so we could support a fully mobile workforce. We wanted our applications universally available to our teams and started to create a workspace aggregation architecture.”

“We place a very strong emphasis on the end user’s experience,” adds Kevin Hartman, Chief Technology Officer, ODOT. “If it takes 40 seconds to start an application on a device in the field vs. four seconds in the office, the end user will let us know – and that will be seen as a failure.”

## Visibility, security, and control for IT teams

In 2014, ODOT began to develop an architecture to meet these goals and deliver secure, fast, and reliable access to a wide range of applications for employees. The team started with directory services, then created virtual applications and desktops, and added Mobile Device Management.

“After that, we needed endpoint encryption; monitoring, active alerts, correlation reporting, and analytics; multi-factor authentication; a way to deploy applications, and an IT Service Management (ITSM) tool. We needed privilege management and end user sandboxing; endpoint security; and password updating,” adds Hartman.

The team created a Workspace Aggregation architecture, and in 2018 implemented the Citrix Workspace to give employees the application and mobile experience they need to maintain efficiency and productivity on any device, over any network.

Citrix Workspace is a secure, intelligent platform that aggregates and serves as an interface between information in legacy systems, on-premises systems, and SaaS systems. Workspace includes endpoint management, content collaboration, access control, virtual apps and desktops, workspace intelligence and analytics.

The solution organizes information for employees, providing users with the ability to search across all files and apps; guides workflows and helps employees collaborate; and automates – using machine learning to streamline routine tasks and help users find the right information from their connected systems of record.

“Citrix tightly integrated with all the current systems we had in our architecture,” said Hartman. “And we’ve been able to pivot the platform for different use cases.”

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**Charles Ash  
Chief Information Officer  
ODOT**

## Keeping employees productive and connected – all the time

ODOT's new architecture, now fully deployed, has changed how employees work – and has helped Ash and team achieve their vision of any application, on any device, over any network.

“We are now more adaptive, can onboard more people, and can use newer types of technologies,” emphasizes Hartman.

The team delivers a seamless user experience with Single Sign-On and on-demand access to applications and data, keeping employees productive. In addition, ODOT has improved support and security for its large community of third-party contractors.

ODOT's modernization efforts were particularly critical as the state worked through the COVID-19 pandemic.

“On March 12<sup>th</sup>, ODOT did not have a work from home policy,” Ash shares.

“On March 13<sup>th</sup>, we did. And, three business days later, we had approximately 1,800 employees working productively from home.” The majority of those employees were using Citrix Workspace.

“We had been taking a trip around the state, speaking with different teams to understand the applications they were using, and identify any that were not already accessible within our new environment,” adds Ash. “When the work from home order was issued, we had just brought many of the applications our users needed in – and there were very few additions needed as they moved to work from home.”

## Meeting extraordinary demand

Along with the rest of the country, Ohio saw unemployment numbers skyrocket as a result of COVID-19. The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS) was overwhelmed with calls regarding unemployment benefits. They did not have the capacity to handle the demand, but knew their citizens needed an answer when they called.

ODJFS requested assistance from other state agencies – asking employees from the other agencies to volunteer to help answer the phones. The plan was to give each volunteer a physical device, loaded with an operating system and ODJFS software.

ODOT stepped up, supporting more than 1,100 volunteers, and importantly, offering an alternative option to provide the volunteers with the applications they needed – quickly and cost effectively – using the Citrix Workspace on volunteers corporate and personally owned devices.

The ODOT team helped ODJFS quickly roll out the Citrix solution with the ODJFS applications. In just three days, ODOT was prepared to onboard thousands of volunteers nationwide with secure access to the applications they needed in order to answer citizens' questions. The approach saved the state money and weeks of labor, and most important – helped deliver vital support to the citizens of Ohio.

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## Smarter together: DriveOhio

ODOT is working on an initiative called DriveOhio, a collaboration between government, research and private industry partners to build Ohio's infrastructure for smart mobility and to facilitate smart mobility innovations.

"Our goal is to make management of Ohio's roadways as real-time as possible, based on events happening on our roadways," says Ash.

The initiative includes building an event streaming platform, fed by IoT data from a range of devices – vehicles, traffic signals, etc. – that can be pulled into an aggregated layer and then into an analytics engine to determine the use for that stream of data.

"As an example, if smart cars report 20 or so hard breaks within a thousand-foot section of roadway, there is probably a problem on that road," says Hartman.

"If we can instantly alert law enforcement, change signs and speed limits, and notify nearby hospitals – we can better manage our roadway."

ODOT is optimistic that the platform's ability to facilitate communication between departments, streamline data management, and improve insights will translate to other sectors besides transportation.

### 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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