

Water company streams reliable, high performance cloud desktops with Citrix

Severn Trent used Citrix Consulting Services to migrate to a Citrix-managed, cloud-based workspace for performance, agility, and cost savings

“As part of the UK’s critical national infrastructure, Severn Trent must stay operational, whatever the situation. That means responding to unexpected business disruptions – such as a global pandemic – as well as ensuring that its own internal infrastructure delivers stable and reliable performance whenever, wherever, and however people need it.

One of Britain’s largest water companies, Severn Trent serves over eight million customers with fresh water and waste-water services. A longstanding Citrix customer, the company used a virtual desktop delivered from its on-premises data centers.

“It had been five years since we last upgraded our Citrix environment,” says IT Director, Mark Gwynne, “and we knew that an upgrade would help address pain points such as slow desktop performance and organizational agility.”

Scaling up to increase desktop capacity for additional employees or third-party service providers would have meant deploying additional physical servers in the datacenter which was, as Gwynne says, a lengthy process.

To improve agility, performance, and to save costs, Severn Trent decided to migrate its existing Citrix environment to Microsoft Azure in a two-stage project. Initially, the existing [Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops](#) environment would be migrated to Azure. This would then be upgraded to [Citrix Workspace](#), leveraging [Citrix Cloud services](#). Severn Trent, [Citrix Consulting Services](#), and Microsoft worked closely together to ensure a seamless migration.



Industry

Public utility

Location

UK

Citrix products

- Citrix Workspace
- Citrix Cloud

Key Benefits

- [Citrix Consulting Services](#) shortens the distance between great ideas and game-changing outcomes, deploying and managing Severn Trent’s Citrix/Azure desktop.
- [Citrix Workspace](#), deployed in the Azure cloud, provides a stable, high performance desktop for 7,000 staff wherever and whenever they need to work.
- [Citrix Cloud](#) services give Severn Trent the agility and resilience to respond quickly to changing business circumstances.

An expert deployment for optimal performance

“We thought it would be better to use Citrix expertise to migrate our Citrix desktops from on-premises to the cloud,” Gwynne explains.

“We started this project in March and we had a pilot up and running by the beginning of May,” says Sam Roberts, Severn Trent’s Cloud Team Leader.

“That demonstrates the value of Citrix Consulting Services. We couldn’t have drawn on so much expertise so quickly without the Citrix Consulting team.”

Citrix Consulting Services ensured that Severn Trent’s virtual desktops were optimized for all users. That included meeting the demands of engineers working on CAD and geographical information system (GIS) applications.

“What stands out across the organization is the personal productivity improvements that have been enabled by the Citrix optimization for Microsoft Teams,” Roberts says. “In our current circumstances, those improvements have been absolutely key.”

Severn Trent staff use Microsoft Teams for audio and video conferencing and collaboration. With individuals in different locations, including working from home, the Citrix optimization delivers high quality video even where bandwidth is limited.

“The difference in speed is also notable,” he continues. “Login times are much shorter and performance on functions like the file browser are completely different. From a usability perspective, desktop performance has improved massively.”

As well as deploying the solution, Citrix is providing Severn Trent with an ongoing managed desktop as a service (DaaS) solution to ease management and create an evergreen environment.

“With Citrix managing the desktop service, we know we have a stable, reliable, and secure system,” Gwynne says. “We will always be on the latest version with security patches applied. Citrix is committed to providing a stable service. We have more stability for our tier zero, critical service than when we managed it ourselves - that’s vital for us as a provider of critical national infrastructure.”

“Being on cloud cuts lead times from months to minutes”

Migrating to Citrix on Azure has given Severn Trent the agility to respond quickly to changing business needs.

“Deploying more servers into an on-premises estate is a pretty lengthy process,” Gwynne acknowledges, “but doing that in Azure with Citrix Cloud services is pretty seamless. We can scale up whenever it is needed.

“We don’t have to try to anticipate what the business might want to do next, because being in the cloud cuts lead times from months to minutes.”

The Citrix and Microsoft Azure agility was essential in Severn Trent’s response to the COVID-19 lockdown, as Gwynne explains:

“Citrix Consulting Services has a level of professionalism, skill, and expertise that’s difficult to find elsewhere in the marketplace.”

Mark Gwynne
IT Director
Severn Trent

“As soon as lockdown happened, we deployed 600 low-cost Chromebooks. The majority of our office workers, wherever possible, worked from home. We didn’t furlough a single worker. And, for everyone working from home, we were able to say if you don’t have a device at home you can use, we’ll provide you with one of the Chromebooks.”

“With the Citrix desktop, we were able to deploy a lot of very low-cost, energy efficient devices very quickly to give people the same performance as they had in the office. We did not experience any productivity issues. That’s been a great success for us.”

The Citrix DaaS solution enabled Severn Trent employees to work as effectively and securely from home as they did in the office.

The employee experience was positive, as Roberts explains: “The Citrix and Microsoft partnership helped by making it easier to use Microsoft Office tools like Teams to help people work and collaborate virtually without feeling isolated. Our staff used exactly the same desktop as they used in the office and it performed consistently.”

Maintaining business continuity for a critical contact center

When COVID-19 hit, the IT team knew that, as part of the country’s critical national infrastructure, they needed to maintain service from their contact center. Severn Trent’s 500 contact center agents are classed as essential workers and were permitted to continue working from the building as other office workers were sent home.

To provide a safe working environment, contact center agents spread throughout Severn Trent offices while other employees worked from home. This enabled them to maintain a distance of two, or even three, meters from colleagues.

Relocating agents within the office and enabling others to work safely and securely from home were both achieved quickly and safely because of the Citrix and Genesys telephony environment used by Severn Trent.

“We were able to maintain our pre pandemic call volumes of around 1.5 million calls and staff satisfaction grew as we enabled them on the Citrix and Genesys. Customers received quicker call resolution and it was a big step forward for the whole team.”

Substantial annual savings on cost and greenhouse gas emissions

In addition to stable, optimal performance and increased agility, Severn Trent is also saving money.

“The biggest benefit is from a cost perspective,” Gwynne explains. “We’re closing down a data center and removing racks we manage in our co-location facility. That represents a substantial annual saving. There’s a definite cost benefit for us in switching to a managed cloud service. Also, by migrating from a relatively inefficient, on-premises datacenter to the efficient, hyperscale datacenter of a cloud provider, we are moving our GHG emissions from Scope 2 to Scope 3 reporting while at the same time reducing them significantly and powering them with renewable energy.”

“From day one, Citrix has been totally committed to us and to making this work for us,” he concludes. “The engagement has been fantastic. Citrix Consulting Services has a level of professionalism, skill, and expertise that’s difficult to find elsewhere in the marketplace. You feel like you’re in safe hands in terms of what you’re doing, the speed at which you can do it, and in the level of support you have once it’s operational.”



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