Afval Energie Bedrijf achieves rapid Windows 7 migration with legacy application support
By securely running the OS and applications locally on the virtualized desktops, processes are more efficient and faster and employees are productive wherever they work—both online and offline.

Jan van der Kolk
IT Manager
Afval Energie Bedrijf

A leader in sustainable energy delivers Windows® 7 and Windows® XP environments side-by-side on the same computers to improve control and flexibility while accelerating ROI.

Afval Energie Bedrijf (AEB), a waste and energy company based in Amsterdam, Holland, is a world leader in the sustainable conversion of waste into energy and reusable raw materials. As a leading municipal agency, AEB is dedicated to creating added value for its stakeholders while providing a mutually supportive, people-friendly and results-oriented working environment.

The challenge: migrating to Windows 7 cost-effectively
Seeking to simplify and reduce the cost of IT management while increasing control, Amsterdam launched a city-wide upgrade to Microsoft® Windows® 7. The upgrade posed a challenge for AEB, which relies on a large number of mission-critical applications not yet supported by the new operating system. Included were custom applications that check the weight of each waste load at delivery, monitor temperatures within the production plant, and measure the amount of energy produced. Upgrading the applications to run on Windows® 7 would have been very costly, delayed the standardization project, and increased the maintenance burden for the three-person desktop management team. “It was going to be very expensive to upgrade the applications, yet the city’s central IT team wanted to move forward with the upgrade project,” says Jan van der Kolk, IT manager for Afval Energie Bedrijf. “We were being asked to move very quickly, so we needed a proven solution—as well as one that would give us flexibility.”

The solution: implementing desktop virtualization with Citrix XenClient
AEB worked with Ordina, an IT system integrator and consultancy with expertise in desktop virtualization, to explore its options. Ordina recommended using Citrix® XenClient® to implement client-side desktop virtualization for its 350 desktop and laptop computers. Making it possible to deliver multiple virtual desktops to a single computer in full isolation, XenClient offered the ability to run both Microsoft® Windows® XP and Windows® 7 environments side-by-side on the same devices with no risk of software conflicts.
“With XenClient, we realized savings of approximately ten percent of our budget. These savings also cover the cost of the desktop virtualization project, so we realized immediate ROI.”

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Key benefit: running multiple Windows versions on a single device
XenClient allows AEB to run multiple operating systems in different virtual machines (VMs) on each computer. In one VM, the central IT department of Amsterdam runs virtualized versions of Windows® 7 and standard applications, including Microsoft® Outlook® and anti-virus software. The other VM runs core production applications on Windows® XP. The solution made it possible for AEB to comply with the mandated upgrade to Windows® 7 while continuing to run and retain control over its mission-critical legacy and custom production applications.

Key benefit: achieving rapid return on investment (ROI) through immediate cost savings
With XenClient, AEB made the move to desktop virtualization quickly with minimal disruption to user productivity. “We couldn’t afford any downtime; it would have shut down some business-critical applications in the plant, which operates 24 x 7,” says Van der Kolk. “It was extremely important that the virtualized desktops were rolled out in as short a time as possible. In the first stage, we had 30 desktop PCs rolled out within 30 minutes.” AEB also gained almost instant ROI due to license savings on the virtualized applications. In addition, the company avoided having to purchase new PCs to run XenClient thanks to its extensive hardware compatibility list. “With XenClient, we realized savings equal to approximately ten percent of our budget,” says Van der Kolk. “These savings also cover the cost of the desktop virtualization project, so we realized immediate ROI. Moreover, we’re seeing more than ten percent reduction in the number of user support issues coming into the help desk, which allows IT to be more efficient and focus on adding value to the business.”

Looking ahead
With its desktop virtualization and Windows® 7 initiatives complete, AEB has found that XenClient continues to deliver value through a high-performance desktop environment. “By securely running the OS and applications locally on the virtualized desktops, processes are more efficient and faster, and employees can be productive—whether working online or offline,” says Van der Kolk.
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