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Vice President of End User  
Computing Strategy  
ACS

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

##### Results

- Achieved fast deployment of virtual desktops for employees and clients
- Improved remote worker and developer productivity
- Reduced time to transmit data from hours to just five minutes
- Greatly simplified Windows 7 migrations for clients
- Enabled Xerox and ACS financial teams to quickly access information using virtual desktops during acquisition
- Improved employee quality of life with the ability to work from home

## VMware View Provides the Foundation for ACS Work at Home Program

Desktop Virtualization Solution Cuts Costs, Improves Productivity, and Speeds Server Deployments for Remote Users and Offshore Developers

### About ACS

ACS, a Xerox company, is a global provider in business process and information technology services. The company supports thousands of customers across a wide variety of industries including education, energy, financial, government, healthcare, retail, and transportation.

Founded in 1988 in Dallas, Texas, ACS recently joined forces with Xerox in 2009. Now, as part of Xerox’s USD \$22 billion global enterprise, ACS offers its clients the immense resources of 130,000 employees in 160 countries, global brand strength, and a constant dedication to innovation.

### Challenges

ACS has been growing rapidly over the last 22 years. As a result of this growth, the company’s infrastructure costs were escalating. ACS started to investigate ways to reduce the operational and capital costs of supporting multiple office locations around the world. One of the options proposed was an initiative to enable more employees to work from home.

The “ACS at Home” program was launched in 2009 to improve employee productivity and reduce the amount of office space needed to support its global workforce. “Our initial goal was to support more at-home workers,” stated Todd Coughlin, Vice President of End User Computing Strategy for ACS. “We wanted to reduce costs, but also improve the quality of life for our employees with the ability to work from a variety of locations—not just from our company owned facilities.”

### Deciding on a Virtualization Platform

Todd is responsible for all desktop support operations for ACS, not only for internal employees, but also for the company’s external clients. When the ACS Work at Home project was given the green light in 2009, Todd and the ACS IT team started to evaluate potential desktop virtualization solutions. “Our top three criteria were speed of deployment, ease of management, and level of functionality,” Todd explained. “After performing thorough evaluations of the options, we quickly determined that VMware was the only enterprise-caliber solution for us.”

ACS started the project by putting together a SWAT team composed of key IT professionals across the company’s various service towers. The team members dug deeply into the proposed technology to understand how each of their specific components—network, server, and desktop—would be affected by the new solution. ACS then engaged VMware Professional Services to validate the proposed reference architecture and document the design before the program was launched.

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#### VMWARE VIRTUAL INFRASTRUCTURE AT WORK

##### VMware View™ 4.0

- VMware View Composer
- VMware View Manager
- VMware ThinApp™
- VMware vSphere™ for Desktops

##### VMware Professional Services

#### DEPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT

- VMware ESX® 4.0.1 running on HP ProLiant, and Dell PowerEdge servers
- Guest operating systems: Windows Server 2000, Windows Server 2003 (32 and 64 bit), Windows Server 2008 (32 and 64 bit), Windows XP Professional, and Windows 7.
- Mission-critical applications running in production on virtual machines: Hyperion financial-reporting software; EMC Documentum; DC Link, an application that controls wireless devices in manufacturing plants; middleware; Internet servers

The ACS Work at Home program started with a small virtual desktop pilot for approximately 100 employees. “We pre-configured the Wyse terminals in our Dallas headquarters and sent them to the employees in the pilot program,” explained Todd. “The packages came with simple instructions listing what the employees needed to do—how to plug the terminals in, how to turn them on, and how to setup an IP address. After entering the information, the Wyse terminals then called back to our datacenter with the configuration information. That’s all there was to the process. Our employees simply rebooted their desktops and they were immediately able to access their applications from anywhere in the world.”

ACS is now using the full suite of products offered with VMware View, including VMware View Composer and VMware View Manager. The company is also using VMware vSphere for Desktops and is evaluating the use of VMware ThinApp to accelerate application deployment and simplify application migration.

## Expanding the Work at Home Initiative

After the successful pilot, ACS made the decision to deploy the virtual desktops to a broader base of employees, starting with more of the company’s remote workers. The second group of candidates included the company’s desktop users, including call center, help desk, marketing, and accounting professionals.

“We’ve already deployed close to 1,000 virtual desktops for our internal employees and are now adding several hundred additional virtual desktops each month,” Todd stated. “We estimate about 20 percent of our 70,000 employees will ultimately be valid candidates for the VMware virtual desktop solution.”

## Providing Virtual Desktops to ACS Clients

The virtual desktop service ACS provides to its clients is very similar to its internal deployment scenario. “Our clients’ remote workers have been our primary targets so far,” Todd explained. “But as our clients start to see the many impressive benefits of deploying virtual desktops for their remote users, they quickly discover other use cases within their organizations where virtual desktops are a great fit.”

“As a leading IT outsourcing provider, our clients look to us for innovation to meet their business needs. Desktop virtualization is quickly gaining a high level of interest from our customers. We tell our clients that we’ve tested all of the other virtualization solutions, have done the research, and have already implemented the solution for our own employees. Our belief is VMware is the only way to go, 100 percent of the time.”

“We have one client that’s already running 200 virtual desktops,” Todd continued. “We’re looking to increase that number by about 600 over the next six months because they just identified a different group of users that are prime candidates for virtualized environment. We have another client who was already using virtualized desktops for its remote users, but due to a merger with another company, needed to deploy 50 more workstations in a very short period of time. We were able to deploy them in less than a week by using the virtual desktops. VMware View enables us to be quick to respond, quick to resolve, and quick to provision desktops to meet our clients’ urgent business needs.”

## Streamlining Offshore Development

The use of virtual desktops has greatly improved productivity of the ACS offshore developers. Communication between the developers’ virtual desktops and applications on the server is much faster now since it uses a local area network connection—as opposed to sending all of the information from India over a smaller connection back to Dallas. “It used to take nearly an hour to transmit the developer data,” admitted Todd. “But now with the VMware virtual desktops, we can move the data in less than five minutes.”

## Simplifying Windows 7 Migrations

“We get into the Windows 7 migration discussion with our clients fairly regularly,” Todd noted. “They need help understanding which of their applications will run on Windows 7 and which won’t, and then help them to define a rollout strategy. Virtualization always becomes part of that discussion—not only for the desktop, but also for virtualizing the applications that are not compatible with Windows 7. VMware View greatly simplifies all Windows 7 migrations.”

## Facilitating the Xerox Acquisition

ACS was acquired by Xerox in February of 2010. As with any merger, providing employees with access to each other’s applications quickly can be challenging. “The Xerox acquisition presented a classic quick deployment scenario for us,” explained Todd. “Our employees needed immediate access to the Xerox desktops, and they needed access to ours. But we didn’t want to deploy any new workstations. Everyone already had workstations—they only needed access to the new applications and configurations. We quickly issued virtual desktops to the finance teams and updated our Active Directory with the new information. This was an obvious fit for a virtualized desktop solution.”

## Next Steps – Providing Private Cloud Services

“We are now working on a multi-tenant configuration where we can provide a full managed desktop as a service on a private cloud to our clients,” Todd stated. “We won’t have to build a separate infrastructure for each client’s needs anymore—which is time-consuming and costly. We are working towards a scenario where we can leverage the infrastructure to deploy virtual desktops to our clients without requiring them to buy any infrastructure at all. They will only need to pay for the portion that is actually used for their desktops. This will be a huge win for us and our clients as well.”

“The VMware View deployment has been so successful that we are now considering closing down some of our remote offices, enabling more individuals to work from home using their virtual desktops,” Todd concluded.

