Apache Corporation Deploys Complex, Energy-Industry Software Using VMware® ThinApp to Save Time and "Hot Swap" Servers/ Workstations

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

INDUSTRY: **ENERGY/UTILITIES**

CHALLENGE

- Rapid deployment of complex software and high-speed updates.
- Control costs and decrease IT and user man-hours.
- Guarantee secure installation with no conflicts or OS corruptions.
- Adopt an application virtualization solution for a 64-bit platform.

RESULTS

- Reduced deployment time.
- Reduced associated administrative costs and man-hours.
- Maintained security and integrity of existing applications.
- Deployed virtual applications on a 64-bit platforms.
- Instituted practice of installing all Citrix applications with ThinApp for deployment through Citrix Streaming Server.
- Gained ability to "hot-swap" workstations and servers.

Apache Corporation Deploys Complex, Energy-Industry Software Using VMware® ThinApp to Save Time and "Hot Swap" Servers/ Workstations

Founded in 1954, Apache Corporation is one of the world's top independent oil and gas exploration and development companies, with operations in the United States, Canada, Egypt, Australia, Argentina and the United Kingdom. Since the company's founding, Apache has grown to $24.3 billion in assets.

Essential to the company's success is a growing and profitable oil and gas company for the long-term benefit of shareholders. Apache's exploration and production technology group promotes the application of technology to maximize asset values, provides technical support for Apache operations and staff, evaluates emerging technologies appropriate for Apache operations, and organizes technical training. Current technology focus areas include complicated seismic programs, 3-D interpretation, subsurface databases, satellite imagery and GIS systems, chemistry programs, simulations, modeling and analysis.

The Challenge

To carry out the function of Exploration Technology in a scientific workplace, software deployments and updates are complex and intensive, creating the risk of application conflicts or OS corruptions. The challenge was to find a cost-effective, secure way to complete these installations and updates without risking a host compromise or application conflict with existing data or processes. Most of the exploration applications are primarily on Windows® XP-64 or Server® 2003 R2 x 64 platforms. It was necessary to find a solution for the virtualization of applications that could handle the 64-bit platform.

The Solution

Only VMware® ThinApp (formerly Thinstall) for application virtualization and Citrix Streaming Servers could handle 64-bit platforms. Apache needed to virtualize applications unique to the oil and gas exploration field, including Petrel (Schlumberger), ArcMap, LAS Tools Pro and Interactive PetroPhysics, all of which required precise, accurate and rapid deployment and processing. With ThinApp, Apache Corporation could deploy the newest versions without delay and be assured of fast application updates. Reducing deployment time for all applications is critical both to the Apache field users and to the financial bottom line, since man-power to deploy and administer is minimized. ThinApp meets all the requirements for cost-effectiveness, ease of deployment and secure, conflict-free operating environment, as well as the ability to handle the 64-bit platform.

The Results

The primary benefit of ThinApp is the reduction in time to deploy applications and updates, because they can be placed in a single ThinApp share directory. Additionally, ThinApp makes it possible for workstations and servers to be "hot-swappable," because they need no application software loaded on them since all applications are installed with ThinApp and not running on the machine. Using ThinApp answered the need for a single solution to deploy both new software and quickly manage intensive updates. ThinApp also delivered cost savings through high-speed deployments with elimination of labor intensive deployment management.

"ThinApp had no problem maintaining integrity and accuracy during deployment and update of the most complex, time-intensive applications," said Bradley Lauritsen, Manager–Exploration Computing for Apache Corporation. "We experienced no conflicts and no OS corruptions. ThinApp went far beyond our expectations and reduced our Exploration Technology costs."

The Future

The Apache Exploration Technology department has deployed applications with ThinApp to a select number of users in the production environment. Exploration Technology will be deploying to many users in the immediate future during the rollout of the newest version of Petrel software. This project was the main focus for Exploration Technology and the reason for searching out an application virtualization solution. With the high level of success that ThinApp provided during the initial phase, Apache intends to broaden the scope of its use and have Citrix applications installed using ThinApp, then deployed through the Citrix Servers. 'This will give us incredible flexibility with Citrix servers because the Exploration Technology department will be able to have only Windows and Citrix software installed locally," said Lauritsen. "With ThinApp as our deployment practice, configuring new servers will be made very easy."

Looking to the future, Lauritsen comments, "ThinApp has successfully changed our deployment strategies, and we are eager to expand its usage to give us even more flexibility while we maintain the highest standards by eliminating conflicts and OS corruptions and decreasing deployment times. We look forward to future software deployments, and the benefits for field users and for Exploration Technology as we continue to use ThinApp as an Apache Corporation IT best practice."

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