CHALLENGE

The National Maritime Museum urgently needed another flexible remote desktop solution at the lowest possible price. The new system had to create an optimum working environment, so that staff could work much faster, on any device and in any location. Another objective was to reduce energy consumption in order to comply with its Corporate Social Responsibility guidelines.

SOLUTION

VMware Horizon, AppVolumes, ThinApp and User Environment Manager (UEM).

RESULTS

Thanks to the shorter log-in times, staff can now get working sooner. The bottlenecks in mobile working have been resolved. The increased computing power now makes it much faster to work with large multimedia files, for instance. This has all achieved the desired flexible work environment. Automatic staff logging-out has led to fewer licences being needed. The new solution is more energy-efficient and requires significantly less management. New workstations can be created easily, quickly and at a low cost.

National Maritime Museum reduces log-in times and energy consumption with VMware

Employees say new virtual workstation is fast

The National Maritime Museum in Amsterdam holds the most important collection of historic maritime documents in the world. Its historic premises are also often rented for large-scale events. The Museum wanted to reduce its employees' log-in times dramatically. In addition, they needed a solution that could specifically support the live streaming of large video files. Finally, the National Maritime Museum wanted to save energy, in order to comply with its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) guidelines. VMware Horizon and UEM were the solution to these problems.

Amsterdam's National Maritime Museum is situated in the former 'Lands Zeemagazijn' (Admiralty Arsenal) premises. Its activities are incorporated in an association, which needs to be self-financing. The events branch takes care of this, among others. The old premises were renovated entirely to ensure the museum is run with maximum professionalism. Partly because of the high costs incurred in the renovation, the IT budget was limited. Nevertheless, it did need serious investment, according to ICT Head René Schröder – and not only with an eye to the future. "The renovation meant the spaces were redistributed, and everything was cabled with a high-quality CAT6 end-to-end connection. Then we migrated from nothing with our LAN to a fully virtualised environment. Since then our staff have worked with thin clients. However, our solution was no longer supported after four years. This produced a growing number of problems."

Supporting mobile working

Staff of the National Maritime Museum work a lot with large multimedia files. "A particular problem was that streaming videos was not working well," recalls Schröder. "And this was happening at a time when we were struggling with more and more content and increasingly larger files. At the same time, log-in times were simply too long, four to five minutes. That really didn't work well. People often simply left their computers running so that they didn't have to start them up again. Add to that the fact that you

wanted to spare your staff having to enter their personal settings each time afresh for each new session. All in all there were irritations with the existing system. Because of the individual tooling, but also because support had ended. We felt we were hostages. In short, we were at the end of the old solution and it was high time for a new one."

The old system was fully depreciated, but it was a heavy blow to the museum that the supplier offered no further development of it after just four years. For this reason, the management introduced extra stipulations for any new supplier. Schröder: "Our starting point was the philosophy of the National Maritime Museum: the new solution had to support mobile working fully. It's also important to us that we meet the CSR guidelines. And the new system had to work well 24/7, every day of the year, and on any device. In the future, we want to digitise our huge collection of maritime documents fully, and on this point too, the solution had to offer solace. It's our intention to offer our staff a rich workstation, which is also suitable for things they are used to from home, like the use of multimedia and USB. Finally, we were looking for a solution that would simplify management. After all, we work with a small IT team here, three multidisciplinary staff."

VDI is superior

Before Schröder made a definitive choice for a supplier, the museum's management first wanted him to conduct

VMWARE IN PRACTICE

- VMware vSphere
- VMware Horizon View
- VMware ThinApp
- VMware User Environment Manager (UEM)
- VMware AppVolumes

ROLL-OUT ENVIRONMENT

- VDI-Appliance IO-275 (2x)
  - SANDisk Fusion NAND SSD Storage
  - Nvidia GRID K1 GPU
- 10Zig PCoIP Thin Clients (110x)
- EMC Fiber Channel Storage Solution

VIRTUALIZED APPLICATIONS

- Document digitisation software
- Productivity applications
- Graphic applications

a thorough market investigation. "We used three parameters to start. The solution had to be affordable, robust and reliable. Then you would normally automatically look at Gartner's leader quadrant. It was very quickly apparent that VMware featured the most plusses. What appealed to me a lot, was that it's one complete integrated system, in which you can sort out authorisation well. Despite the advantages we were already aware of, we kept an open mind when considering the applicability of VMware Horizon within our IT environment. Our implementation partner DHS then made several proposals. What was immediately noticeable was the increase in writing access speed which the VDI solution would deliver. With a virtual machine we could generally achieve the same thing, except that its higher energy consumption meant it didn't fit within our CSR policy. The implementation time DHS felt was needed, the price and the time required were also not the most favourable. The management team would only make a choice if our proposal was solidly substantiated. Really a formality."

Extra computing and processing power

The National Maritime Museum was convinced that VMware would offer the best solution. "We had given ourselves two months to install the VDI solution. That went according to plan. The VDI appliances gave us a lot of extra computing and processing power. The logic of the solution resides in a number of servers, including the UEM service for setting up the personal profiles of our staff. Everything was easy to install and configure. Where a tick may have been incorrectly placed, it was resolved in a couple of hours," according to the ICT Head.

Rosy future

All the requirements the museum had stipulated at the start were met. Schröder, finally: "It's a splendid solution. Everything connects with the VMware solution so quickly. It's really unrivalled. Those logging in are taken directly to their own digital workstation through the web browser. And for a mere trifle we can create a new one. I actually did that myself most recently while I was checking-in at the airport. That would previously have been unthinkable. We spend much less time on management. Previously, the helpdesk received three support requests a day. That's been reduced to one a week. Two departments depend substantially on multimedia. Now these staff can work easily with heavy applications, wherever they are and whatever device they are using. Everything also runs a lot faster. An additional advantage of VMware Horizon is that we need fewer licences, because anyone who is inactive is automatically logged out. This way our resources are returned to the system. We have 110 licences, but no more than 70 are ever used at the same time. That makes a great difference in processing power, which delivers us a significant energy saving. I see a very rosy future. VMware has made it apparent it intends to continue evolving solutions like ours. It will serve us for a long time to come. The most important continues to be, however, that our staff really can notice that the system's speed has increased. Logging-in now only takes a fraction of the time it previously needed."

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