Contract support services for Lindsay ISD.

A Common Problem

Lindsay ISD was suffering from a problem common to many school districts. They had aging computers, but a full refresh was not in the budget. DeAnne Page is the Director of Finance and Support Services at Lindsay ISD, and has a strong finance background. When she took over the technology department, she knew something would have to change. Previous technology decision makers had begun installing Macs in computer labs, but at $3,000 a piece, adding more Mac labs was not in the budget.

Nearly all the remaining PCs were in need of replacing. "Most of our stuff at Lindsay ISD really needed to be replaced. We probably needed to get rid of 90% of what we had and buy new, but that wasn't going to happen," Page says. Trying to keep the aging machines limping along would require numerous support hours, and was not a realistic option.

The HVE Solution

It was then that Unified ConneXions proposed VDI. "We liked the idea of VDI because we could still keep the Macs, reuse some of our older equipment, and not have to replace everything at a big expense. VDI was a way we could get more bang for our buck," says Page.

For a small implementation like Lindsay ISD required, a traditional VDI deployment was out. The large infrastructure purchases that would have to be made to give traditional VDI architecture optimum performance is not cost effective for a small number of desktops. But HVE's VDI appliance was a perfect fit. The scalability of the appliance, and no additional infrastructure costs meant that even with a small number of desktops, total cost per desktop was still low enough to meet their tight budget. There was even enough left in the budget to replace some of the oldest machines with new LG zero-clients.

After an assessment of needs and budget, it was decided two HVE-51 appliances would best meet the requirements of the school district. LG zero-clients were also chosen for their integrated monitor, allowing them to get rid of some power hungry CRT monitors.

Profile

Location: Lindsay, Texas

Students: 486

Staff: 65

Dedicated Technology Staff: 0

Overview

Number of Virtual Desktops: 108

Who is using VDI? Students in labs and the library, and administrative staff

Equipment: 3 HVE-51 Appliances

Zero-clients: 35 LG 19" Integrated Monitor

Environment

VMware vSphere 5

VMware Horizon View 5.1

3 linked clone student pools, and persistent faculty desktops

Initial deploy time (2 appliances, zero client install and thick client repurposing): 2 days

Expansion (1 appliance): 4 hour

Behind the Scenes

There was no existing SAN when HVE came in to deploy VDI, and with HVE's VDI Appliance, none was needed. The local storage on the appliances was used to create a virtual SAN, allowing for separation of user data from the OS and applications. Separate linked clone pools were created for elementary, middle, and high school students, with a unique base image for each. The faculty selected for VDI each got a persistent desktop.

Zero clients were setup, and old computers repurposed to run View in Kiosk Mode to make login to the virtual desktop seamless. The total setup time for the HVE Appliances, pool creation, end-point configuration, and testing took two days.

This summer Lindsay ISD decided to expand their VDI environment and add another HVE-51 appliance. The expansion process took 4 hours.

VDI in Action

This is Lindsay ISD's second school year on VDI, and the response has been positive. Students are now making better use of network storage drives for documents rather than cluttering up the desktop. The performance is far and away better than the physical desktops in use previously. "I'm on VDI as the Director of Finance, and I don't have any problems with it," says Page.

The ability to update systems and troubleshoot remotely has been a big advantage for the district. Because they contract IT Support Services, remote support means they don't have to wait for a technician to arrive on site. Issues can be addressed immediately. Application management has been simplified as well. "I like it because when we have something we need added, it just gets pushed out and there it is. Done," she says.

Looking Forward

Lindsay ISD has been very successful in their use of VDI. Budgets were kept in check, but performance was not sacrificed. Page's thoughts, "We are anticipating growing VDI." As they grow their VDI environment, it will be as simple as adding additional HVE VDI Appliances, much like they did this summer. They also plan to continue using zero-clients to replace old desktop units as they die.

About HVE ConneXions

HVE's engineering philosophy is to create Manageable, Scalable, Reproducible and Predictable (MSRP) solutions. We base our solutions on proven virtualization technologies running on high-performance, next generation hardware. The result is an overall cost-effective and high-performance environment that scales to customers' needs.

Lindsay ISD

Lindsay Independent School District is a 1A school district located about an hour north of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Total enrollment in the district is 486 students. They have no full-time dedicated technology staff, but instead contract support services with Unified ConneXions. This arrangement provides both unique challenges and advantages, and creates a perfect opportunity for VDI.

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 –DeAnne Page,

Director of Finance and Support Services, Lindsay ISD.

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