

VDI Appliance & STAGE install for Brownsboro ISD.

The Problem

Brownsboro ISD is a growing district with a number of older computers requiring frequent repairs as well as an increasing number of new computers being added in the district. The technology staff was not increasing, further compounding the problem. Todd Sissom, Director of Technology, put it this way, "We had a lot of machines that were aging out, and we wanted to try and see how we could squeeze more life out of those. Also we wanted to find a way to simplify the repair and update process to be able to manage increasing numbers of machines with the same amount of staff."

Experience

The district began looking into virtual desktops as a solution a couple of years ago. They brought in a company with a proprietary solution to run 50 desktops. They tried it and even purchased some proprietary end-devices, but weren't impressed with the results. "Nothing ever really took off and made us want to go with the other solutions we looked at," explained Sissom.

Then Sissom attended a VMware event at a nearby school district and was introduced to HVE and Horizon View. Brownsboro was already successfully using VMware to virtualize servers, so extending that to the desktop with View made sense. A proof of concept was then installed by HVE, and the performance of the new hardware and environment changed the feeling of indifference toward VDI left by the previous solutions. Because of the success of the proof of concept with HVE, they knew it was time to move forward.

The HVE Solution

It was decided 100 desktops would go into production. As with any new system, there was a transition period while technicians learned and adapted to troubleshooting something new. "Any error we had, it's the first time we had seen the error. Everything was new. We didn't want to have 1000 of them out and try to learn these processes. It's a lot less impacting to have one lab with an issue rather than every computer in the district," observed Sissom.

Two (2) HVE-100 appliances were purchased in order to maximize performance and have redundancy. The solution was uniquely designed to integrate with their existing VMware environment, and left no server overhead on the HVE appliances.



Profile

Location: Brownsboro, TX

Students: 2900

Staff: 400

Dedicated Technology Staff: 2

Overview

Number of Virtual Desktops: 100
(with room to expand)

Hardware: 2 HVE-101 Appliances,
2 STAGE Servers

Length of deployment: 2 days

Who is using Virtual Desktops?
Superintendent, Special Ed
Director, Technology Department,
Jr High Lab

Brownsboro Independent School District is a 3A district located in Brownsboro, Texas, near Tyler. The district has a total enrollment of approximately 2900 students and a staff of 400.

The HVE Solution *continued*

The slower spinning drives of the existing environment were used to run vCenter and the View brokers, leaving the all-SSD storage on the appliances entirely dedicated to running desktops. The entire setup and training, including installation of new zero-clients, took two days.

Outcomes

After running VDI desktops in production for 6 months, the experience is still good. Even though an additional computer lab was added to the new wing of the junior high built last summer, there hasn't been additional strain on technicians' time. The technician doesn't need to go on site to fix problems or issues, but instead can fix it from his desk. Sissom stated, "Really we can fix a lot of the problems just by working on the console. The changes to settings, applications, or whatever the request we receive is pushed out to everybody who logs in after we've made the changes."

Seeing the possibilities for expansion hasn't been difficult. Already technicians are better equipped to handle a growing pool of computers, even after a limited roll-out. Overall user response has been positive as well. "Last year was proof of concept. This year we believe in the concept and we've got some key players using it including the Superintendent," said Sissom. To encourage expanding VDI, decision makers in the district will be utilizing the platform to see exactly how well it works.

Update

After this successful initial experience with HVE and knowing that their legacy virtual server platform had reached end of life, the next year Brownsboro ISD chose to leverage HVE's high end computer STAGE servers that offer more for less. Using the latest STAGE servers, they were able to do with 2 servers what would have required 3 with the previous vendor. Some of the money saved was then put into growing their VDI deployment that continues to prove itself and gain popularity among teachers and administrative staff.

About HVE ConneXions

HVE was created to combine proven virtualization solutions with state of the art best of breed hardware to support next-generation Cloud requirements. 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. Our MSRP approach to engineering provides customers a wide range of open virtualization solutions that will not only meet but exceed expectations.

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– Todd Sissom

*Director of Technology,
Brownsboro ISD*



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