



CENTRAL SUSSEX COLLEGE



CUSTOMER STORY

Central Sussex College

Central Sussex College aims to offer something for everyone in the form of further education – whether you're a potential chef, engineer or high-flying accountant.



Central Sussex College

With a mission statement to ‘be the college of choice by putting skills and learning at the heart of everything it does’, currently there are around 11,000 students studying at campuses across the central Sussex region in Southern England.

Desktop for the classrooms

So when the college was looking to refresh its classroom desktops, the IT support team was keen to look at the options for thin clients. “We had experience of server-based computing in the college and wanted to look at the options for thin clients in the classrooms as a way to effectively deploy and manage our classroom desktops,” said David Finch, Director of Information and Learning Technology. “Another important consideration was the need for the desktops to be able to cope well with multimedia.”

In the past, multimedia has been a weakness of thin clients because of the difficulty of running the high bandwidth service over server-based computing networks to thin devices. For the college it was becoming an increasingly important element of the education system with students, particularly those on practical courses such as plumbing and bricklaying, reviewing videos as part of their learning.

After an evaluation of four different thin client products from leading vendors, the college quickly settled on using IGEL. “We liked the fact that IGEL offered a variety of hardware solutions and also its Universal Desktop Converter software, which meant we could convert our old PCs into thin clients and still use them until they were no longer viable.” The final crucial aspect in the decision to go with IGEL was the ability for the devices to handle multimedia using the Microsoft RemoteFX protocol included with the units.

IGEL’s Universal Desktop strategy enables organizations to deliver all their server-based applications, anywhere, with the best user experience, security, ease of management, and lowest total cost of ownership (TCO). The software, or firmware, embedded in every IGEL Universal Desktop contains the industry’s largest collection of server-based protocols for connecting to centralized applications. With Linux, Microsoft Windows Embedded Standard and Microsoft Windows Embedded 7 operating systems available and IGEL’s different Feature Packs (Entry, Standard and Advanced), customers only pay for what they need.

RemoteFX enhances the user experience for remotely displayed graphics. This enhancement allows Windows desktops and applications – including Windows Aero, Microsoft Silverlight, and Adobe Flash animations; full-motion videos; and 3D applications – to be displayed remotely with nearly the same quality of user experience over local networks (LAN), as can be experienced directly on a local PC.

The Universal Desktop Converter Software (UDC) allows organizations to migrate their existing PC or old thin client hardware into a fully manageable IGEL Universal Desktop thin client-like device. It is capable of delivering Citrix®, VMware and Terminal Server desktop applications, utilizing the full software functionality of IGEL’s Entry, Standard or Advanced Feature Packs. The Universal Desktop Converter Software is an ideal introduction to thin client technologies and minimizes the initial procurement costs of new client hardware.

THE CUSTOMER

- ▶ Central Sussex College
- ▶ Dedicated to providing further education for everyone
- ▶ 11,000 students across multiple campuses



THE CHALLENGE

- ▶ A more cost effective and manageable desktop solution
- ▶ Extending the life of existing PCs
- ▶ Able to run multimedia

The college worked closely with IGEL partner and desktop virtualization specialists Cutter Project to establish its own server farm to operate the IGEL thin clients and UDC-converted old PCs. The desktops were managed from the central server farm running Microsoft Windows Terminal Services 2008 software.

“Cutter Project were a great help in initially setting up the server farm and supporting us when it was required,” commented David. “The secret was getting the server-side right first and then the rest of the IGEL roll-out was straightforward; particularly as we had a lot of thin client experience in our college IT team already.”

Roll-out and management of the new desktop regime was straightforward using IGEL’s Universal Management Suite software. This UMS software, which comes free with every device, can be used to set-up, maintain and upgrade all IGEL thin clients from a central location. It is a simple to use management tool, which can have thin clients up and running in minutes. Intuitive to use, secure and scalable up to 100,000 thin clients, the IGEL UMS drastically reduces management time for IT administrators.

Today, Central Sussex College has the IGEL UD3 Linux desktops running the Advanced firmware package at classrooms across multiple sites connected by a Wide Area Network (WAN).

Benefits are plentiful

With the IGEL devices and IGEL converted PCs the benefits are clear for the college. The IGEL devices are easier to manage and require less support. When updates are required, the devices can be quickly and efficiently updated centrally – removing the need to visit each desktop.

The devices are also more reliable than traditional PCs because they contain no moving parts and their life expectancy can be 6-8 years – much longer than a traditional PC. In addition, the devices are very secure because they are not vulnerable to viruses, all data is stored on the server, not on the desktop and the units can be lockdown as required, for example, by standardizing the desktop or removing the ability to use the USB ports.

“The whole process has been very smooth,” concluded David. “The IGEL roll-out was very quick and simple, the support from Cutter Project has always been excellent when we have required it and we will certainly be considering rolling out IGEL thin clients when we open our new campus in the coming year.”

THE SOLUTION

- ▶ IGEL UD3 Linux devices with the Universal Management Suite
- ▶ IGEL Universal Desktop Converter
- ▶ Linux devices with RemoteFX capability

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thin clients

development

services

solutions

Many functions. One device.