Case Study

Foreign & Commonwealth Office, San Franciso

A flexible thin client solution with remote access capability

cutter

Goal

The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) wanted to run a 32 seat desktop environment on a 12 month pilot basis utilising new desktop technologies.

Background

The FCO established a worldwide project to look at alternative technologies to achieve greater degree of sustainability in desktop computing. As part of this project a number of embassies and consulates worldwide participated as pilot offices to assess the technologies being trialed - one of the locations being the Consulate General situated in San Francisco, California.

The FCO had identified that the Sun Ray thin client from Sun Microsystems (now Oracle) could offer them the kind of benefits they were seeking from a desktop device and they approach Sun with a view of commissioning a pilot directly from the vendor. Sun were unable to commit to delivering the proposed pilot within the required timescales and budget and therefor turned to Cutter, as recognised experts in their technology, to come up with a proposal.

CLIENT PROFILE

Client:

UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Solution:

Sun Ray thin clients with Secure Global Desktop remote access software

Sector:

Government

Having discussed the project requirements with both the FCO and Sun Cutter was able to propose a pilot system that met the project requirements, including delivering within the desired time frame and within the allocated budget.

The Consulate General office in San Francisco is a 32 seat environment served by a data centre some 30 miles away. The users operate the usual array of productivity software together with a number of in-house applications. A number of the users are internationally mobile and require access to their working environments from anywhere in the world.

The Solution

Having assessed the FCO's requirements Cutter proposed a 32 seat Sun Ray 2 device based solution coupled with Sun's (now Oracle's) Secure Global Desktop remote access software to facilitate the mobile users.

Oracle's Sun Ray thin clients are simple, low-cost devices that are ideal for displaying server-hosted virtual desktops and RDS sessions.

With no moving parts and no local operating system to manage, Sun Rays provide a cost-effective, highly functional thin client alternative to desktop and laptop computers and reduce many of the problems associated with traditional desktop deployments.

Large user environments comprising thousands of Sun Ray devices can be managed from a single interface with enough individual control to provide a choice of desktop operating systems per Sun Ray Client or per user, while still leveraging the benefits of virtual machine templates and multi-user operating systems to reduce management overhead. It is never necessary to visit a Sun Ray client to perform an upgrade, enabling centralisation of desktop IT management.

A number of users in the pilot environment travel extensively and required access to their desktop whilst away from the office, often in other countries. To enable the users to still be effective and have access to their desktops Cutter implemented Sun's Secure Global Desktop (SGD) software to provide the required remote access capability.

SGD is a web based solution that provides users with secure remote access to centralised systems from any computer or mobile device with a Java enabled web browser. Seamlessly presented applications and full screen desktop sessions running on a mix of Windows Remote Desktop Servers, Unix Servers or a VDI environment can be delivered to authenticated users from one easy to use point of access.

Installed on the Solaris Operating System, Secure Global Desktop ran alongside the Sun Ray Server software so users were able to resume their office based Sun Ray connections from the office with a remote Secure Global Desktop connection when on the move or connecting in from home.

Client software installation is not necessary with SGD - users have full access to their applications and data so long as they have an Internet connection. Data and applications do not need to leave the data centre and users can have all the access they need without the need to transfer data to their local device. This gives clear advantages in relation to data security and compliance.

The Implementation

The servers were pre-configured before being shipped to San Francisco, needing only to be racked at the Sun's data centre and powered-up. Final commissioning and continuing support was provided by Cutter staff located in the UK and Dubai. Cutter remote build and management system meant that no customer site-visits were necessary during commissioning thus reducing deployment costs and speeding up implementation times. Once the system was commissioned and running a visit made to the Consulate General for training and handover purposes.

Impact and Success

The system was used extensively consulate staff, both office and mobile workers. Due to reliability, freedom, flexibility and general functional differences to a PC it was found that staff productivity was significantly increased.

Such was the resounding success of the technology within the office it was requested that the system be retained beyond the 12 month project period.

The FCO has yet to make any final decisions regarding their operation wide technology.

For more information contact Cutter at:

E: info@cutterproject.co.uk
T: +44 (0) 203 151 0196

Registered Office:
18 Lynn Road
Ely
Cambridgeshire
CB61 DA