



A STRONG PARTNERSHIP

The data center of the Financial Management department of the German region of North Rhine-Westphalia used NetInstall to automate the management of its Citrix server farm.

The Financial Management department of North Rhine-Westphalia (RZF) serves 137 tax offices, two regional financial management offices and three training establishments from its data center, employing fully 600 IT staff to support 32,000 workstations. 17,000 of these are Citrix terminals, meaning the applications are not hosted on the workstations themselves but on central servers. This brings with it many advantages, including lower licensing, installation and maintenance costs and significant time savings when upgrading software. Automated management of the RZF Citrix servers allows the Citrix Mainframe Presentation Server technology to deliver even greater value, and the tool that enables this to happen is enteo's NetInstall solution.

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Bernhard Hadaschik, RZF department head

More and more companies are moving away from the traditional client-server model and embracing server-based computing taking. And given the advantages that thin-client architecture offers in comparison with an exclusively PC-based environment, it's not hard to see why. Thin clients offer a viable alternative to the desktop PC, in particular when it comes to applications accessed by a large number of people, and the data center of the Finance Administration department of North Rhine-Westphalia decided to replace over half of its PC workstations with thin clients. These devices are supported by a total of 550 MetaFrame-Presentation Servers, making the RZF system one of the biggest Citrix infrastructures in Germany. 17,000 of its workstations now no longer run applications themselves, but use applications hosted on local Citrix server farms. Citrix's own ICA Client acts as the front end for the user, ensuring seamless communications between the thin client or PC and the server farm.

Significantly lower costs through centralized application hosting

Because all the applications are run on central servers and not on local computers, installation and upgrade costs are significantly reduced. The task of system administrators is much easier because applications, patches and hotfixes no longer have to be installed on each individual PC. “Reductions of between 25% and 50% per user can be achieved in system and network management expenses, maintenance and operating costs,” says Bernhard Hadaschik, RZF department head. These cost savings are made possible by the software with which the applications are installed on the MetaFrame Presentation servers and the servers configured: the NetInstall system management solution. This enteo product is used by the Düsseldorf-based authority to manage not only its 15,000 PC workstations, but also its entire server infrastructure. “The arguments for automated client administration are also valid for servers,” explains Claus Friedrichs, Managing Director of sepago GmbH, a Cologne-based IT services company that specializes in combining server-based computing

environments with automated software distribution, fully exploiting the advantages of both technologies.

Automated system management integrates seamlessly with the concept of server-based computing. Hosting applications on a single server instead of hundreds of PCs already significantly reduces costs, and further savings can be achieved by automating the management of these servers. Using NetInstall, not only can the RZF bundle and install applications on the server, but its system administrators can also implement upgrades, patches and hotfixes from a central point at the click of a button. One advantage of this is that application packages can be distributed both to the MainFrame Presentation servers and PCs at the same time. In a mixed environment such as that operated by the RZF, this makes day-to-day administration significantly easier.





Automated administration – the server pays for itself

The decision to manage the servers using NetInstall paid off handsomely for the RZF, and this prompted the Finance Ministry of North Rhine-Westphalia to replace its existing servers at all 142 sites. Only two infrastructure servers are now needed per site, compared with four previously, reducing the total number from 568 to 284. "This project proved once again that we made the right decision in using NetInstall for server administration," reflects Dominik Stilz, network administrator for the RZF. The consolidation process was completed in just four months.

The next challenge was to migrate the server operating system to Windows Server 2003. This decision was prompted by two things: Microsoft's withdrawal of product support for the Windows NT4 operating system, and the fact that NT4 was no longer able to meet the RZF's requirements in terms of security and stability. The new Windows Server 2003 operating system is much more stable due to its revised driver model. It was also decided to move to version 3.0 of the Citrix MetaFrame Presentation Server at the same time as the operating system upgrade was being carried out.

Automated rollout for a smooth migration

Before the upgrade of the MetaFrame environment could be started, certain preparations had to be completed. These included: the introduction of Domain Name Service (DNS) and Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP); rollout of Windows Server 2003 and of Active Directory; the establishment of file, print and database servers; migration to Exchange 2003; and the upgrade of clients to Outlook 2003. The timeframe for achieving all of this was just ten months. This ambitious plan could only be achieved by standardizing the hardware and software installed and by automating system management tasks. Enter NetInstall, which enabled most of these tasks required to be set up and executed without manual intervention. The entire rollout of DNS and DHCP was handled efficiently and costeffectively

by the distribution of software packages, as was the installation and configuration of SQL and Oracle databases, modification of security settings and the distribution of server applications and anti-virus software.

The rollout started on November 15 2004, and the Düsseldorf tax office was the first in the region to go live with the new set-up. From November 24 onwards, three further offices a day were migrated to the new system architecture. The rollout is expected to be completed by mid-March, an ambitious schedule that has only been possible with precise project planning and automated processes. "Without NetInstall's automated administration, the migration would have been absolutely impossible," says Dominik Stilz. "The project has been a tremendous success and we are convinced that we will still be able to say that when the final office migrates next March."

www.rzf-nrw.de



About enteo

enteo Software is a world leader providing solutions for software and application management, covering software packaging and deployment, automated server build, patch management, security management, hard- and software inventory, remote control and user profile management for MetaFrame Presentation Servers and Windows-based environments.

enteo Software has been in business for almost ten years and currently counts more than 2,400 customers and 2.5 million managed devices with excellent and verifiable customer satisfaction around the world. enteo Software's NetInstall® is scalable for installations from one to many hundreds of MetaFrame Presentation Servers.

www.enteo.com



About sepago GmbH

sepago specializes in developing innovative solutions in the area of client and server management, planning and implementing practical and cost-effective customized solutions for complex IT environments.

sepago focuses on system design, implementation and cost optimization in server-based computing environments. Combining this with software distribution structures, the firm is in a position to design highly automated modular server farms delivering long-term benefits. sepago is an enteo competence partner, working closely with the company's systems management specialists. sepago's combination of enteo and Citrix products guarantees that IT solutions delivered to its clients will be both simple and cost-effective to develop and operate.

sepago's experience includes projects successfully implemented for Barmer, Techniker Krankenkasse, the computing center of the Financial Division of the North Rhine-Westfalia region financial authorities, Vodafone D2 GmbH, Agfa Gevaert AG and is:energy. sepago solutions are suited to all industry sectors. The company is based in Cologne, Germany.

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