Behind the Scenes at The Hurlingham Club: Teradici & Pivot 3 Desktop Virtualization

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DAVID APPLETON
IT MANAGER
THE HURLINGHAM CLUB

Bordering the Thames in Fulham and set in 42 acres of magnificent grounds, The Hurlingham Club is a green oasis of tradition and international renown. Recognised throughout the world as one of Britain's greatest private members' clubs, it retains its quintessentially English traditions and heritage, while providing modern facilities and services for its members. The Club continually looks at ways in which it can improve – for both current and future generations – the first-class social and sporting facilities within an elegant and congenial ambience.

AT A GLANCE

Challenge
- IT staff supporting users in 9 buildings (campus-like infrastructure)
- Fitting modern technology into a historic site
- Finding a VDI solution that was budget friendly for a medium-sized business

Solution
- Pivot3 "VMware Horizon Suite in a Box" solution (P Cubed VDI appliances)
- PCoIP zero clients, with integrated Teradici Tera2 technology
- Teradici PCoIP Hardware Accelerators
- Teradici PCoIP Management Console

Results
- **Ease of deployment:** non-technical office staff can install their own zero clients; the solution integrates nicely with point of sale and back-office business applications
- **High performance:** PCoIP hardware acceleration delivered user experiences equivalent to traditional PCs, even for video streaming (installation of Teradici Hardware Accelerators doubled frame-per-second results)
- **Cost savings:** savings of 12 – 15 percent compared to initial VDI deployment estimates that included dedicated servers and supporting storage area network
- **Lower cost of ownership:** patch management (improved security), remote management, and visibility

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When faced with the substantial expense of a desktop hardware refresh, The Finance Committee and The Executives challenged IT to research and propose a solution that would ensure the best value for the Club. The selection criteria included:

- An affordable initial cost and ease of deployment for IT management

- Ease of use for non-technical PC users, and high performance for more sophisticated users (video streaming was a critical benchmark, with users demanding frame-per-second throughput consistent with traditional computers)

- Improved manageability, including remote visibility and support capabilities, for fast issue resolution.

The Club and its technology partners have introduced server virtualization over the last few years. A long-standing relationship with a local consultancy helped IT initiate VDI investigations and address the technology committee's initial concerns about potential risks.

"When we first talked about thin clients, the IT Working Group was concerned about network outages bringing all desktop work to a halt," explained David Appleton, IT Manager at The Hurlingham Club. "Since our data is highly centralised, this objection went away as a network outage would be the same, thin clients or not. The potential for cost savings for our desktop hardware refresh was what kept us all moving towards VDI, especially after we saw examples of other large corporate desktop pools being deployed with VDI. Seeing virtualized desktops in use successfully in other environments with similar demands to ours was also a factor in the decision."

In late 2012, IT carried out a proof of concept for a virtual desktop solution incorporating a new storage array and dedicated hosts. Although the user experience was well received, the price tag was too high so they continued to seek a more affordable solution.

"That's when one of our technology suppliers told us about Pivot3 and its 'Horizon View in a Box' solution," said Appleton. "The appliance runs VMware and combines storage, ESX hosts, View broker – literally everything you need is running on this one box that supports a defined number of desktops."

A follow-on proof of concept of the Pivot3 and a competing appliance highlighted The Club's need to boost throughput to the Teradici PCoIP zero clients across the site. Once again, the technology partner had a solution – the Teradici PCoIP Hardware Accelerator (APEX 2800). "Adding the PCoIP Hardware Accelerator card to the Pivot3 appliance gave us an immediate boost, from 10 frames per second to 24 or 25 frames per second for video on the zero clients. That solved that problem," said Appleton.

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Products used

Pivot3 VMware Horizon Suite in a Box

Zero Clients with integrated Teradici PCoIP Tera2 processors

Teradici PCoIP Hardware Accelerators

Teradici PCoIP Management Console

Unidesk desktop management & layering

At the completion of the pilot program, the PCoIP hardware accelerated-VDI solution met all of the requirements, starting with a 12–15 percent reduction in cost compared to the initial option considered by The Club.

A demonstration to the chairman of the IT Working Group further persuaded the organization that it had made the right choice. "He sat at the zero client monitor, with integrated Tera2 technology, and he thought it was a brand new PC," said Appleton. "We've now started rolling out the solution and I've been using my zero client exclusively. I've had no issues at all – it's as if I am sitting at a physical desktop."

The rollout has been fast and easy for IT and end users alike, with 50 percent of staff at The Club already up and running on new virtual desktops. Teradici's PCoIP Management Console simplifies the management and deployment of zero clients, and enables remote manvagement.

"With the Teradici Management Console, I can autopush settings out to the zero clients, check and update firmware versions... I can easily manage the clients from one place, be they PCoIP zero client displays or desktop PCs, without running all over the site," said Appleton.

PCoIP zero clients offer users flexibility, and change the way that IT is managed. They simplify installation to a degree that allows even non-technical users to set up a new desktop client in minutes – for example, to replace a failed unit. When combined with Unidesk virtual desktop layering, the solution provides The Club with virtual desktops that meet its requirements for manageability, flexibility and performance.

"I've been very impressed with Teradici, Unidesk and Pivot3," said Appleton. "If someone tells me they are looking at VDI, I'd recommend Pivot3, VMware, Teradici and Unidesk. The Teradici PCoIP technology is easy to deploy, especially in the case of the Pivot3 appliance and Teradici-powered zero clients. It gives us a minimal, clean desktop that is nicely integrated in terms of support for Logitech wireless keyboards and mice. It's quick to plug it all in and it just works. Eventually, we plan to have no physical desktops for our staff."

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