nimble works   IGEL

IGEL IS FAST TRACKING LINEAS

LINEAS
YOUR FREIGHT FORCE

Lineas is the largest private rail freight operator in Europe, with headquarters in Belgium. The freight forwarder offers high quality rail products and complete door-to-door logistics solutions. Their mission is to offer exceptional rail products and services enabling companies to shift their freight transport from road to rail. This allows them to improve their supply chain whilst reducing their impact on mobility, climate and air quality. Lineas's fleet consists of more than 7,000 wagons and 250 locomotives and they have eight physical locations in Belgium and Germany, with 24/7 occupation, ensuring continuity of service. Employees must always be ready to answer questions and anticipate unexpected situations around the railway. These specialists, including logistics coordinators and real-time planners, monitor and guide the trains utilising specialist applications.

“Employees are now located anywhere they want with their own working environment at their immediate disposal. The virtual desktops are designed with a Windows look and feel with Single Sign-on, with many applications immediately available to users.

IGEL is superior in terms of manageability, which is reflected in the number of service calls, that has been approximately halved, since implementation.”

Eli Mondelaers,
CT-Projectmanager at Lineas

THE CUSTOMER

- Lineas: European Rail Freight Operator
- > 2100 Employees
- > 1000 Desktop & Laptops

THE CHALLENGE

- Remote desktop & laptop management within a Citrix environment
- Transition from a local to a centralized virtual IT system

THE SOLUTION

- Replaced outdated endpoints with Thin Clients: 150 x UD7s
- IGEL Universal Management Suite for workplace environment management

THE RESULTS

- Low management burden
- Low purchase and management costs
- High flexibility
- Bulletproof configuration
- Service calls have decreased by half since implementation

PREREQUISITE

For Lineas, technology is a prerequisite to do the job; whether it concerns the planning of the trains, the maintenance of the equipment or the administration. They aim to standardize as much as possible, based on a Citrix infrastructure to ensure that many matters can be centrally arranged. The rail carrier currently has 85 host servers distributed over 2 data centers. Each host server can hold up to 20 sessions running parallel and the computer park consists of around a thousand devices; desktops and laptops.

In the past the logistics and planning experts worked with Windows 7 desktops that were managed by Infrabel. About fifty of these were available, divided across the different locations. These devices worked partly with local storage and USBs and with published applications via Citrix Virtual Apps [these virtual applications function as if they were installed locally]. Users have access to the published applications and boot in the same way as they do with native applications. The management of these systems was complex and troubleshooting could take some time, especially as not every location has its own IT service employee.

Nils Joossens, Citrix Administrator and Network administrator at Lineas, says: "People had their favorite system and if they couldn't use it, they had to choose a different workplace and adapt the settings to their own preferences. That takes time - and can go wrong."

BULLETPROOF

When it became known that Infrabel was no longer permitted to work for third parties and therefore no longer allowed to manage the Lineas desktops at the stations, Nils Joossens and his colleague Eli Mondelaers, ICT Project Manager at Lineas, had to quickly switch.

There were three points on the men's wish list for the new workplace environment within the stations - a low management burden, low purchase and management costs, a high flexibility and a „bulletproof" configuration. Their choice was to purchase new Windows 10 devices or switch to thin clients.

Eli Mondelaers says: "With a migration to Windows 10, we would need to replace the desktops with relatively expensive systems, that need to be managed on the spot and where IT service desk employees must be on site to do such.

We wanted to get rid of that situation. Lineas contacted Nimble, an IT service provider specialised in building and managing virtual workplace environments, about the possibilities of thin clients. At Lineas, Nimble has co-realized the Citrix infrastructure, which they now jointly manage.

Nimble is also a partner of IGEL. Nils Joossens explains: "They are a trusted partner of ours. Nimble knows the technology,

our organization and our needs. Dieter Boonen and his team have made the translation of our demand into a solution based on IGEL."

Following their advice, three IGEL thin client models were tested: the UD7 came out as best in class. "We wanted to ensure that our users based at the stations were best served and that the transition from a local to a centralized system would be as smooth as possible. An important condition for coordinators and planners is to be able to work on multiple monitors. A maximum of four screens can be connected to the UD7 concurrently," says Eli Mondelaers.

SERVICE CALLS

After choosing the hardware, a successful „Proof of concept" was carried out at the main location in Brussels, which further strengthened the belief in the IGEL solution. The project team therefore decided to put the IGEL solution into production, replacing the obsolete desktops with thin clients, with Citrix running directly on the IGEL OS including the IGEL Universal Management Suite for easy management of the workplace environment.

Employees, dependent upon a good functioning computer got quickly used to the new thin client setup and management experience of the IGEL solution.

Eli Mondelaers: "Employees can be located wherever they prefer and instantly have their own working environment at their disposal. The virtual desktops have been setup with a Windows look and feel with Single Sign-on and most applications are instantly available for the user.

IGEL is superior in terms of manageability. That also shows in the number of service calls, that has been decreased by half since implementation."

After the successful migration of the fifty critical workstations, an additional hundred UD7 thin clients were installed for employees who provide on-site guidance and inspection at eight stations.

The ICT team is working on the replacement of mini-PCs with IGEL UD2 clients at the barriers of four gates at the shunting yard in Antwerp. Nils Joossens states: "Here also, the operating system was out of date and we wanted to install a bulletproof system. We do not have an IT expert on site by default on the marshalling yard. If the barriers at the gates don't work, chauffeurs will not be able to un- and offload their goods, this will result in a costly delay. Now we can quickly resolve software-related issues remotely. Should the hardware no longer function, a pre-configured „spare" thin client will be made available on site which can be installed easily and deployed quickly, saving a lot of downtime."

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