



“10ZiG helped us break new boundaries into the world of desktop virtualization...”

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(South Bromsgrove High School)

CUSTOMER STORY

South Bromsgrove High School combines academic excellence with an outstanding range of opportunities beyond the classroom and is the UK's largest school-based center for the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Rebuilt in 2007, South has been designed to provide the best possible learning environment for each of its 1300 pupils. Considerable thought was put into the new school design so that ICT could be used effectively to make the learning environment as interesting and student friendly as possible.



THE CHALLENGE

South Bromsgrove High's IT Team were looking to refresh worn out PC's which were unable to run the latest operating system (OS). Using the cost of replacing them with new PCs as a target, the school looked to find the most economical way to provide desktops in these classrooms. Not only did the new solution have to provide value for money, but it also had to provide scalability and a uniformed user experience throughout.

Janet Lines, Network Manager for South Bromsgrove High said, "We have around 1300 students and 150 staff here at South for whom we provision 1200 desktops. Providing an ongoing hardware and software strategy at that level is an expensive undertaking. Due to a sizeable reduction of our IT budget, it was imperative for us to find a more economical way of providing desktops so that it wouldn't impact on the learning facilities and environment we afford our students.

"Off the back of visiting the BETT show, we saw 10ZiG Thin Clients being showcased, and really wanted to see if we could utilize them here at South. Our main interest came from the long lifespan and reliability that Thin Clients could offer us, which would in turn lead to cost savings. Before we could even look at testing them though, we needed either a desktop or application delivery solution in the back end. We trialled XenApp, XenDesktop and Horizon View, with a target cost-per-desktop equal to that of traditional, standalone PC's including hardware, licensing and installation. After weeks of testing and research, no one could give us a definitive cost-per-desktop and whichever way we worked the figures, they just didn't fit in with our budget."

Paul Clifton, Head of ICT at South, added, "From a curriculum side, the budget cutbacks were a real worry, especially given that we have a Technology College Status to uphold. Without a solution in place, it really was a dooms day scenario where we were facing the real possibility of a drastic reduction in the number of desktops we could provide."

At the eleventh hour, South were pointed in the direction of a new product called Kaviza, now Citrix VDI-in-a-Box (VIAB). Within 2-3 days they had a virtual desktop environment up and running within the school and they set about testing it with evaluation Thin Client devices from 10ZiG, NComputing, Dell Wyse and HP. Following their testing, South decide to go ahead and purchase VIAB as their desktop delivery solution along with 10ZiG Linux Thin Clients.

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THE SOLUTION

South implemented Citrix VDI-In-a-Box along with 10ZiG HDX Linux Thin Clients to utilize alongside their existing PC estate. The new solution has allowed for a more cost effective way of providing IT services within the school, without impacting on the number of desktops they can provide.

After moving forwards with VIAB, Janet Lines explained the reasons behind their decision to choose 10ZiG Thin Clients as part of their new desktop strategy, “When we first started to investigate VIAB (as Kaviza), 10ZiG was the only dedicated device for the solution and we found the other vendor’s devices didn’t provide the user experience we wanted for our students. They were too complicated and didn’t mirror the user journey of a PC. 10ZiG stood out by offering us exactly what we wanted, including an intuitive user journey, affordability, and ease of management and configuration.

Paul Reizlein, Senior Technician at South, and ‘National ICT Technician of the Year’ 2011/12, elaborated on the management side of the 10ZiG devices, “The 10ZiG Manager is very easy to work with and the deployment of a 10ZiG device within a classroom takes just a matter of minutes. We simply add the device to the network and then push out an image from the 10ZiG Manager. We also push out firmware updates and templates to whole classrooms or even groups of classrooms simultaneously. In comparison to other management consoles I have encountered, 10ZiG Manager is definitely the most impressive and intuitive to work with.”

South will also be testing the auto-deployment feature of the 10ZiG Manager which means the 10ZiG devices are capable of downloading their own image when entering the network. This feature also works across VLAN’s either by broadcast or unicast discovery and knows which firmware to utilize based on the devices IP Range or other specified criteria. The facility to automate the deployment of a 10ZiG Thin Client will mean that even less time will be spent manually installing hardware. In South’s case this is particularly important as the IT Team only consists of four people. As an added bonus, the 10ZiG Manager is completely free of charge and offers an unlimited user license.

Janet Lines continued, “We started to see the rewards of our new solution very early on when we replaced 75 desktops in Mathematics. Our budget was the equivalent cost of 75 traditional desktops, including licensing and installation. Not only did we come way under that target budget, but we also managed to provide another 32 workstations on top of that, and all of them running Windows 7 desktops.”

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THE BENEFITS

By utilizing VDI-in-a-Box with 10ZiG HDX Linux Thin Clients, South now has a desktop delivery strategy that not only provides them with greater desktop control, but also goes above and beyond their expectations of what they could achieve with their reduced IT budget. Nearly four years into their project and they are still reaping the savings that this solution has brought, without reducing the number of desktops they can provide within the school.

Janet Lines explained the financial impact of the new solution, “Starting in 2011 when we first went live with this project, we projected our IT costs over the next 10 years, comparing Thin Client costs against Fat Client (PC) costs. We found that by utilizing Thin Client technology we will have saved a massive £576,000 by 2020. This figure doesn’t even account for the energy savings we will make as a result of using Thin Clients either. Typically our PC’s use around 60-80 watts of energy compared to the 10ZiG devices which use between 8-12 watts. We believe that we can make this solution affordable and sustainable for the next 20 years.”

Richard Auger, Assistant Head of Faculty Performance and Enterprise at South, gave his insight into the working environment now that the 10ZiG devices have been implemented, “The classrooms with 10ZiG Thin Clients implemented are much quieter than classrooms with traditional PC’s. The same can be said for the heat too as the 10ZiG devices produce very little compared to the PC’s. Both of these factors make for a more comfortable working environment for me and my students and you can certainly notice the difference. This can only be of benefit to the students and ultimately the productivity of my lessons.”

Paul Reizlein highlighted a reduction in support at the desktop, “The 10ZiG units are ready to roll straight out of the box and really don’t require any support once they are in. The students don’t need any training to utilize them either and have made the transition seamlessly without even knowing that they aren’t using a PC. Even better than that, because they are locked down, the students can’t do anything other than what they are meant to. If they try to do anything outside of connect or disconnect it just brings them straight back to the log-in screen.”

Janet Lines summarized her experience with 10ZiG Technology, “10ZiG helped us break new boundaries into the world of desktop virtualization, helping to seamlessly create a working environment for our students which totally exceeded our expectations. Not only by providing us with an excellent product, but also by working closely with us in developing exciting new features for the future. I am a firm believer that people make a company, and working with both 10ZiG staff and products has been a very positive experience. Not only would I recommend 10ZiG, I already have done on a number of occasions when we have had visitors.”

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