Case Study: LEROY MERLIN

Customer feedback and testimony: VUEM implementation for 20,000 users

January 2014
Case study update: 12 months later

After 12 months using VUEM in their environment, we went back to the Leroy Merlin team and asked if they were happy with what Norskale had done for them so far.

Leroy Merlin IT team confirmed they are experiencing constant sub 15 seconds login and very fast apps reaction times, without any of the usual performance decay. They are now reporting weekly on these figures as it became one of the lead indicators for service quality in the group: you don’t want stores’ customers waiting on sales reps while they login or have delays on their critical published apps.

End-user surveys have shown an up to 91% users’ satisfaction with their desktops... This simply confirms that a fast desktop is the main IT success criteria from your end users perspective.

Leroy Merlin reported a very small number of incident or issues while using Norskale technologies on a day to day basis. All points were resolved in a matter of hours/couple of days. Workspace management and contextualization was critical and is working flawlessly.

Thibaut LEHOUQC, Leroy Merlin’s Project Manager and VDI lead:

“It is not often that vendor come back to ask if they have delivered on promise.

So it is with real pleasure that I can confirm to the Norskale team that they have duly delivered on Every aspect of their commitments: top performance, scalability, resilience, low TCO and ease of use.

VUEM is now one of the core elements of our infrastructure. It has been a no-brainer investment that really paid off for our project.”
Objectives

- Deliver a mobile and very fast access to their applications and desktops for their 20,000 users.
- Reduce the project and ongoing management costs, as well as minimize project complexity

Background information

With 120 mega stores and more than 21,000 employees, Leroy Merlin is one of the major players in the European and French Retail industry. The vast majority of users work as sales representatives in mega stores and manage a very large number of products. It is vital for this user population to have access to their Windows-based applications and desktop on different workstations, across multiple stores and multiple locations within each store.

For its new desktop generation, Leroy Merlin has opted to equip 20,000 users with hosted shared desktops on XenApp 6.5 with Platinum licenses (running on Server 2008 R2 and RDS) and to keep 1,000 users running on “fat” Windows 7 desktops/laptops. This project is currently fully running in a pilot store and is being rolled out to the entire organization from September 2012. To manage users’ profiles, Leroy Merlin has decided to use Citrix “User Profile Management” (UPM). This choice eliminates issues around a profile's corruption and reduces the storage footprint. By streaming the profile, UPM also saves a few precious seconds at login times.

Challenges

1. Login times and workspace reaction times

Users working on the store’s floor perform “login/log-off” actions multiple times every day and are constantly facing customers who expect immediate answers. It is therefore important that the reactivity and performance levels of the workspaces remain very high constantly: minimum login and application reaction times. Before implementing VUEM, the average login time would vary from 1min and 30 seconds to 2 min 30 seconds, and this process would be repeated multiple times a day. Users could also receive various error messages.
2. Users’ context management

Users are moving between workstations in multiple stores and their workspace must then automatically adapt to this new context. A key objective is to dynamically reassign network drives and an application’s access depending on the connection site. Before implementing VUEM, these changes had to be done via Leroy Merlin’s support team. As a result, users suffered waiting times and productivity losses combined with the additional support costs for the IT department.

3. Complexity and cost of managing Scripts

Login scripts and complex scripts multiplied organically to answer the functional needs of the internal customers. This difficulty was reinforced by the different experience and skill levels within the internal team and the external service providers: multiple operators, script languages, historical layers, etc… The situation had reached a level of complexity and opacity that made day to day management very difficult.

4. Reduce project and management costs

As in any next generation desktop project, the total cost for Hardware, Services and Software Licenses is high. Leroy Merlin was clearly intending to constrain its costs by quickly reducing the number of support calls related to workspace issues. It was also important to control implementation and licenses costs on every element of the project, as well as to minimize the average server cost per user.

Solutions

1. Login and workspace reaction times

A POC was done in a pre-production environment (1 day of work). Login times reached their definitive level below 15 seconds and users have also noticed a clear improvement in terms of reactivity, with applications opening and reacting almost instantaneously.

And these performances are and will remain the same over time, while it is common knowledge that in an environment not equipped with VUEM that also relies on Scripts performances at login and app executions do deteriorate rapidly over time.
2. Management of user context

Depending on the user name, its network ID or other relevant criteria, VUEM makes sure that the specific network drives are mapped and the right application’s icons are present on the correct workstations.

Users are managed as a group or individually, with their specific requirements turned on/off in a few clicks and taking into consideration which group they belong to.

3. Complexity and management cost of Scripts

The VUEM interface is simple and intuitive on the vast majority of options. This ease of use has translated into a fast and complete knowledge transfer during the implementation of the solution. It could have been simply organized in a single day of training.

The need for specific skills in scripting languages has been completely eliminated. Likewise, the dependency on the few “historical” experts has disappeared and all admins can easily and immediately react to the environment every time it is needed.

4. Reducing project and management costs

a. Implementation and licensing cost

With only 5 days to fully implement and configure VUEM, our solution has saved several hundreds of days of services compared to competitive technologies. At an average cost of €800-€1500 per day (US$1,000 - $1,900) for scarce senior resources, this initial aspect had a clear importance.

From a licensing point of view, VUEM’s Enterprise license was more competitive.

b. Increased number of users per server

Our built-in RAM and CPU optimization notably reduced the server footprint of individual users in Leroy Merlin. Beyond the improved performance that can be observed on the user side, Leroy Merlin should register 20% more user per servers.

c. Reducing support and management costs

Following this project, Leroy Merlin is expecting a 15% decrease in term of support calls regarding users’ desktops and workspaces.
Conclusion and testimonies

Thibaut LEHOUCQ, Leroy Merlin’s Project Manager:

“VUEM brought all the functionalities we needed in terms of workspace and performance management. It offered the best performances on the market and that was made visible as early as during the POC. The integration with Citrix UPM was also an important point for us as it is the reference technology for profile management. The level of performance delivered in our production environment after only a few days of work went beyond our expectations”.

Philippe MAURICE, Leroy Merlin’s head of infrastructure:

“VUEM brought a very quick and important ROI as it immediately delivered the level of performance and scalability that had been announced by the vendor. The ease of set-up and daily management has been an important factor in our decision to work with this technology. Furthermore, the sales and technical support we got from the Norskale solutions teams have made it easy to accept their proposition. I can only recommend this technology and this team.”

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