

UP-AND-RUNNING IN 10 MINUTES WITH IGEL IN LIMBURG MUNICIPALITY

Gemeente leudal



Central in the province of Limburg, The Netherlands between the two center cities Roermond and Weert, bordering Belgium, lies the large rural municipality of Leudal. Leudal has about 36,000 inhabitants spread over 16 villages and with an area of approximately 165 KM it is one of the largest municipalities of Limburg. Special is the large nature reserve Leudal from which the municipality derives its name. The village centers also have plenty of greenery. In the vast outlying area are many agricultural businesses.



» *It's done with the intermediate steps and duplicate logons for different applications. A new user can literally be up-and- running inside in 10 minutes, versus the hours of PC deployments we were used to."*

Edwin Bakkes,

System Administrator, Municipality of Leudal

THE CUSTOMER

- Municipality of Leudal: local government in central Limburg
- 300 employees
- 220 workplaces
- Two branches

THE CHALLENGE

- Manage VMWare Horizon workstations
- Multiple monitors at each workstation
- Reduce TCO
- Extend life of existing hardware

THE SOLUTION

- Existing desktops have been converted to IGEL
- IGEL Universal Management Suite for central management of the IGEL UD-thin clients

THE RESULTS

- Simple and efficient management of the digital workstations
- Lower TCO
- Rapid deployment of new workstations
- High user satisfaction

Leudal's town hall is located in Heythuysen. A large part of the 300 employees come to one of the two offices several times a week to take care of building applications, civil affairs, green spaces and other matters. An increasing portion of these activities are conducted digitally. The IT team of twelve people is responsible for the ins and outs of the complete infrastructure and the services that run on it. Edwin Bakkes, system administrator within the municipality of Leudal, has a wide range of duties. In addition to the workstations, he takes care of the entire server park, the Nutanix cluster and the VMware/ Horizon environment. He also deals with DHCP, DNS, Group Policy, Active directory and everything related.

ALTERNATIVE

Because of the large percentage of employees working at one of Leudal's locations and the associated costs for hardware, software and management, Bakkes and his team decided to look at an alternative way to set up the workstations. "We wanted to move toward better and simpler management of our workstations, where we would have easier remote access to the systems and a better grip on users through policies and profiles," he says. Updating the firmware also had our attention."

In addition, Leudal exclusively uses VMware Horizon, the platform for running and delivering virtual desktops and apps. The municipality's IT team found it unnecessary to run a complete Windows network including fat clients in addition to VMware Horizon. This was partly due to its manageability and partly due to the high license costs of the operating system. Bakkes said:

"The Windows systems gave too many problems in combination with updates and the like. In addition, migrations to new Windows versions were very time-consuming and expensive."

Ultimately, the Leudal municipality expressed the desire for all organization-wide workstations to be equipped with two monitor connections, and

in certain instances, even three. Explaining the rationale behind this, Bakkes stated, "In the previous setup, we had to procure a separate graphics card to enable this functionality. Initially, we did so for individuals working with CAD applications. However, we observed that nearly all employees preferred working with dual monitors. Hence, we aimed to incorporate this aspect into the project as well."

During the search for a new setup for the digital workstations, Leudal's IT staff soon found themselves at another municipality, which at the time had equipped many workstations with IGEL and was particularly pleased with the solution. IGEL offers a Linux-based operating system optimized for secure, scalable delivery of virtual desktops and cloud workstations, such as VMware, Citrix and Office 365. In addition, IGEL offers a complete management package that centralizes and simplifies the deployment and management of digital workstations.

"They opted to use IGEL clients, which immediately appealed to us as we were also in search of a reliable and secure alternative to our Windows systems. Additionally, IGEL supports dual monitors or even three monitors as a standard feature, without incurring additional costs for graphic cards, unlike our Windows systems."

After that, things moved quickly. Following a week-long Proof-of-Concept phase during which a small number of IGEL systems were tested against the criteria, the decision was made to equip all workstations - a total of 220 - with a UD3 or a UD7 and dual monitors. The migration went smoothly and was completed in a time frame of two weeks. The IGEL UMS server was installed in the network and the IGEL UD3 and UD7 systems were connected to it.

Using user profiles and containers, the workstations were set up and deployed. “Compared to a migration of Windows systems, the complexity was zero,” concludes Bakkes.

PASSED WITH HONORS

The introduction of IGEL also facilitated a scenario where officials could conveniently select their preferred seating. A pre-established reservation system ensures a continuous overview of the available workstations at various locations. For the concerned official, the process simply involves grabbing coffee or tea, settling at the desk, powering up the IGEL device, and logging in with their username and password. This grants direct access to the VMware Horizon environment. The system is so user-friendly that even employees with personal laptops frequently opt for an IGEL workstation when they are at the office.

Bakkes and his team affirm that the implementation of IGEL represents a significant leap forward. “We currently maintain an impressive availability rate of 99.99%, and we take great pride in that achievement. Moreover, the system latency averages at 0.7 milliseconds, a result of our configuration with the VMware clusters and Nutanix clusters. Overall, they exhibit remarkable speed.” In the event of an IGEL UD malfunction, there’s a swift resolution in place. Standard additional devices are kept in stock, ready to be promptly connected to the network and operational again within half an hour. The appreciation for the quality of the digital workstations is evident in the numbers, as employees consistently rate their workplace satisfaction at eight to nine in surveys.

The IT department of the Municipality of Leudal has also experienced notable improvements. The management of workstations has been minimized, resulting in a significantly reduced workload for the service desk in handling

user queries. Additionally, performing a firmware upgrade or downgrade is now a straightforward and swift process.

The speed of deployment is another significant factor, Bakkes explains: “On-site deployment of thin clients involves unpacking, installing on the desk, and connecting to the network. The IGEL UD thin client receives the correct configuration immediately at startup through the IGEL UMS management system, based on the profiles created for each department. It’s simply a matter of plugging in, turning on, and rebooting.” Users are then promptly directed to the login page of the VMware Horizon environment, where they sign in with their username and password. The system administrator notes, “Gone are the intermediate steps and double logins for various applications. A new user can be up and running within 10 minutes, compared to the hours-long PC deployments we were accustomed to.”

The purchase costs of a thin client with an IGEL UMS license are also significantly lower than the acquisition price of a desktop PC and Windows license. Bakkes notes, “Not to mention the licensing costs for the underlying management infrastructure. Combined with lower maintenance costs over the depreciation period of the endpoint and the fact that we no longer need to perform monthly WSUS patching, the total cost of ownership is considerably lower than before.” Within a year, a third office of the Municipality of Leudal will open, equipped with thin clients featuring IGEL OS.