

Progressive College in NY Metro Area

New Desktop Virtualization Environment

Progressive, technologically forward thinking college in the NY Metro area is recognized as a national leader in providing a focused, career-oriented, quality education to its student body with the integration of classroom learning and real-world experience. This college also understands the value and importance of technology and is very progressive in its adoption and use. When the college was looking to create a more efficient desktop environment and improve the student experience, they looked to Vicom and VMware for help.

Challenge

Historically an early adopter of technology, this college recognized quickly that using and maintaining PC environments can be very expensive and inefficient. With multiple types and models of PC's to manage across campuses, and static or shrinking budgets, the college needed a way to reduce overall PC costs, to extend the useful life of existing and newly acquired desktops, and to more efficiently manage their PC environment. All of this had to be accomplished in a way that maintained a rich student technology experience, for which the college is well known.

Implications

Through analysis and to address IT budget concerns, the college determined that their PC's must have a minimum of a 5 year useful lifespan. This is difficult to accomplish using traditional physical PC's. The purchasing and refreshing of PC's at 3 year intervals, commonplace in business and academic environments, creates a huge cyclical spike in PC spending which the college found unacceptable.

In addition, the wide variety of PC's on campus was very difficult to manage, requiring extensive use of IT personnel to travel to individual PC's to service, update and patch. And most importantly: the college could not provide the rich technology experience that is desired for its students, as their on-campus PC experience (desktop and software applications) had been tied to whichever PC they happened to be using.

Solution

Vicom helped the college to architect a Desktop Virtualization solution that included VMware View. The solution created an environment of VMware View implemented on existing PC's and traditional thin clients to

replace 500 "physical" student desktops located throughout the campus. The solution gives the college the ability to provide standardized software regardless of the type and manufacturer of the PC or thin client and regardless of their location on campus. Therefore a student could login at any physical desktop and have the same desktop, software, and personalized settings.

Central management of the solution is handled through VMware vCenter. All patching and updates of software is done at the server only once, a significant improvement over the previous situation wherein PC's needed to be patched and updated individually. In addition the existing PC's can be used as thin clients until they outlive their lifespan and usefulness; at that time the PCs will be replaced by a true thin client, which for the college will be able to expect a minimum of 7 years of useful performance.

Benefits

The college was able to create a PC environment and overall strategy that facilitates centralized management, simplifies patching and maintenance, and allows for the lifespan of the physical desktop (a PC or thin client) to reach at least 7 years. This will help the college maintain predictable and consistent costs, and has already led to significant savings, particularly in regards to ongoing operational costs. The initial 500-unit implementation was so successful that the college is currently implementing an additional 1500 virtualized desktops, with a goal of virtualizing all desktops on campus.

Most importantly, this solution has allowed the college to provide its students with a richer, more exemplary technology experience—for which it has long been known—while reducing expense to the college.



About

- National leader in providing career oriented education
- Progressive adopter and believer of technology in education
- First offered Distance Learning in 1998

Solution Highlights

- VMware View environment for 500 users, expanding to 2000 users
- Vicom architectural services to design correct solution
- VMware vCenter for overall and patch management
- Vicom Professional Services for implementation and integration into college's existing PC environment
- Lifespan of PC environment increased from 3-5 years to minimum of 7 years
- Significant cost savings in both capital and operational expenses
- Provides for a richer technology experience for students
- Provides for a methodology and structure to address BYOD