

SUCCESS STORY

Tickets.com implements NComputing thin client solution to enhance computer infrastructure and deliver scalable efficiencies

Challenges

- Streamlining application performance enhancements, system configurations and troubleshooting
- Continuous upkeep with PC patches, updates and hardware
- Reduce need for workstation technology refreshes
- Ensuring PCI compliance
- Increased time and cost investment

Solution

- NComputing N500 thin clients
- Citrix XenDesktop

Results

- PC software updates performed at the server and delivered seamlessly to thin clients ensuring consistent updates
- Data is securely stored on the server and not on the end point computers, ensuring PCI compliance
- Enhanced systems performance as data never leaves the data center
- All configurations and settings centrally managed, eliminating need to build out networks and reducing technical staff time on-site
- An easily replicated and cost effective solution to offer current and future Tickets.com clients
- Improved customer service across its entire client base
- Lower total cost of ownership



About Tickets.com

Tickets.com, Inc. is a privately held subsidiary of MLB Advanced Media, LP, the interactive media and Internet division of Major League Baseball. First incorporated in 1995 and later rebranded as Tickets.com, Inc. in 2001, the company was initially a merger of nine ticketing firms.

Tickets.com is headquartered in Costa Mesa, California, with regional offices across the U.S. and around the world, including Canada, Europe, Australia, and Asia. Tickets.com's diverse client portfolio includes Major League Baseball, National Hockey League, major arenas, large performing arts organizations as well as the 1996 Atlanta and 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games.

Tickets.com seeks a solution to further strengthen customer service and support through improved PC management

Tickets.com, the leader in cutting-edge technology and innovation, provides ticketing solutions for thousands of sports and live entertainment venues worldwide. The demands of high-volume ticket sales are complex and system delays or downtime cause frustration and impact revenues. As part of its constant effort to provide superior customer service across its entire client base, Tickets.com looked for solutions to improve efficiencies in software updates; paying particular attention to box offices and kiosks, where sales representatives had been relying on traditional PCs and printers to process orders and print tickets.

To ease management and generate better economies of scale, Tickets.com, at one time, considered replacing its existing PCs. However, the number of PCs within its network requiring maintenance was becoming difficult to sustain with patches, updates and hardware, including maintaining PCI compliance.

"The ongoing need for software updates and hardware refreshes across our fast growing client base was becoming increasingly difficult to efficiently manage," said Matt Igl, Director of Information Technology for Tickets.com. "We were looking for a solution that would allow us to effectively manage operations remotely and centrally so we could easily add hardware and apply firmware updates without requiring technical staff onsite."

To help identify the right solution, Tickets.com enlisted MTM Technologies, a leading national provider of innovative - next-generation - IT solutions designed to empower modern organizations of all sizes and verticals. MTM's unique solution-based methodology, combined with its experience and expertise, has enabled thousands of industry-leading organizations, like Tickets.com, to effectively address business needs, optimize the returns on IT investments, mitigate risk and focus on growth and profitability.

Implementing a new solution tied closely to box office and ticket sales required the ability to print tickets, including barcodes on tickets, through a special application that communicates between the USB port on a PC and a printer. After evaluating its needs and consulting MTM, Tickets.com determined that Citrix's tight integration with USB ports would support the company's ticket printing requirements. "During our conversations, we understood the demands of the end-users as well as the organization. Our design process allowed us to simplify the end-point management layer while allowing the end-user to consume rich content and experience excellent performance," adds Bill Kleyman, Director of Strategy and Innovation at MTM Technologies. "The idea was to create a holistic platform capable of integrating with virtual applications, desktops, and workloads which would be delivered to a powerful, and economic, end-point architecture." To achieve this goal, MTM recommended using *NComputing N-series* thin clients because they are built specifically for Citrix virtualization environments, taking the guess work out of which endpoint would work best in Tickets.com client environments.

Tickets.com implemented 100 **N500** devices with two Major League Baseball clubs in California. The benefits of the **N500** devices were immediately realized by the clubs, dramatically reducing the footprint previously required by PC's simply by placing the devices on the back of monitors via VESA (Video Electronics Standards Association) mounts. Compared to the typical week-long process of setting up traditional PC workstations, which involved configuration and settings; implementing the **N500** devices took less than a day.

"Once the thin client devices were online it was easy to configure all of them centrally," said Igl. "It was a big plus for us to be able to put them on-premises and connect them over the Internet so we didn't need to incur the cost of building out a network. The time and resource savings were significant."

NComputing N-series thin clients enable Tickets.com to ensure PCI compliance because data isn't stored at the device level. Instead, data is encrypted and stored centrally within the organization's data center. Before implementing this solution, every PC had to maintain PCI compliance, which also included the prevention of web browser storing history. By using a managed virtual environment all browser memory is wiped clean when a user logs out.

Overall management of their ticketing stations improved greatly for the participating MLB clubs, allowing group policies to be applied at user log in while still allowing customized settings for each user including desktop backgrounds and bookmarks. Regular software updates are now streamlined since everything is performed centrally rather than being installed and configured on a PC-to-PC basis.

"The time required to do patches each month in order to maintain PCI compliance would vary, but it was something we had to manage on each individual computer and sometimes we would run into challenges on a particular machine," said Igl. "Using *NComputing* thin clients makes things a lot easier by letting us implement one update for all endpoint devices"

System performance also improved with the combination of Citrix XenDesktop and *NComputing's N500* thin clients, directly impacting and improving customer service. It only takes 40 seconds to restart a PC and begin using the applications shortly afterward, half the time from before, which is a key point when patrons are waiting at a ticket window. Tickets.com can also effectively support its end users when hardware breaks. The simplicity of the **N500** devices makes it easy to troubleshoot and repair problems or swap out hardware if needed

Tickets.com estimates a lower total cost of ownership for its VDI solution versus a hardware refresh, which improves as it adds PCs. The company plans to roll out the *NComputing N-series* devices to existing customers and new clients in an effort to provide a consistent workstation environment that is easy to support, cost effective and scalable.

"After an extensive analysis across thin client options to work with our Citrix environment, NComputing is our partner of choice. The NComputing N-series exceeds all of the requirements, and we have a valuable partner whose N-Series thin clients and personnel will play a key role as we build and maintain reliable ticketing technology for our venue partners and their customers."

Joe Choti
President and CEO, Tickets.com