



Enabling work mobility with virtual thin clients | Customer Success Story

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*Mirco Suter
Head of Consulting and Engineering
Conapro GmbH Schweiz*

NComputing replaces KIBAG's PC infrastructure with a desktop virtualization solution

The rising demands of working life are driving the need for flexibility and mobility as well as for better connectivity in the working place. Ensuring remote access to corporate data is still a great challenge for the IT departments of enterprises. Today's employees need access to applications and company data any time and everywhere and they want to be able to use their PCs, notebooks, tablets or smartphones for work. Therefore IT departments need an effective solution for easy and cost effective management of IT applications across a range of devices. Enterprises of every size could benefit from a virtualisation solution that offers simple manageability of thin clients and mobile devices and a lean and easy-to-use PC working place environment.

In this scenario users have access to virtual desktop environments that are centrally stored in the data centre and not on single clients such as PCs, notebooks or smartphones. This provides a safe working environment, while ensuring users can access IT applications from every device and any location. At the same time the IT department is able to centrally and efficiently manage thin clients instead of PCs and end consumer devices.

The KIBAG group, a leading manufacturer of construction and building materials, was facing the challenge of reducing the high expenditures associated with managing PC desktops and mobile devices accessing the corporate network. In the course of upgrading the IT system to Windows 7 KIBAG decided to introduce a virtualisation solution.

The KIBAG group consists of 13 gravel plants and 22 concrete plants, 17 construction management offices as well as recycling and waste management enterprises. 1,600 employees are working in the three business units focused on producing building materials, delivering construction services and environment and waste management. By virtualising PC desktops at the different business units KIBAG wanted to centralise and simplify IT management, while achieving better scalability to be able to quickly and easily provide new machines after acquiring another company.

In the beginning of 2012 KIBAG Dienstleistungen AG completed the transition to a virtualisation environment in cooperation with Conapro GmbH and was looking for a provider of thin clients. Conapro GmbH managed the upgrade to Windows 7 and advised KIBAG in the decision making process regarding the thin client devices.



At that time NComputing was the first partner of Conapro GmbH to be able to provide System-on-Chip (SoC) thin clients. “Compared to other providers NComputing offered a very good price-performance ratio and excellent support,” Mirco Suter, Head of Consulting and Engineering at Conapro GmbH Schweiz confirmed.

“The fact that the chip and the firmware were provided by a single source was crucial.” The technical service and the personalised support after the implementation of the virtualisation solution were well appreciated. “Large suppliers would have not been able to provide such personalised service and support,” Suter added.

N500 devices replaced mobile computers

KIBAG introduced a Citrix environment for 550 users connected to 65 locations throughout Switzerland. Before that every single desk was equipped with Windows XP operating system of its own which resulted in high administrative costs. To overcome this issue KIBAG used N500 thin client devices in a Citrix XenDesktop environment. The N-series thin clients were connected to the existing internal company network and a new Windows server, 2008-R2, was installed.

The NComputing N-Series thin clients are based on Numo™ 3 System-on-Chip (SoC) technology that delivers real HD video experience, while consuming only five watt power. Using a web based console, IT administrators can easily manage the N-series devices anytime and anywhere. Regardless of the number of users connected to the console, the vSpace Management Center supports remote firmware update, change of configuration and resetting of the devices. This considerably reduces the administrative workload of maintaining and controlling access to IT applications across the working environment. Besides those employees that are using mobile devices in field offices or at construction sites, the N500 devices are used in all electronic data processing departments of the company. The N500 is replacing all PCs as well as a large part of the notebooks at KIBAG.

Many employees used to be provided with a notebook, but didn't make use of it effectively. Instead of cost-intensive mobile devices employees are now using the fast N500 thin client devices that are connected to the Windows 7 server powered by Citrix XenDesktop. A central portal provides secure access to the Windows 7 system from any location while data is centrally stored, enabling employees to access the company resources a lot easier and faster than before. Thus the work environment – a Windows 7 user work place – is virtualised providing a high-level of security. In this scenario the IT infrastructure is managed from a single platform which reduces the administration effort and improves efficiency. This significantly eases the management of the N500 devices and lets the IT department take care of their core business.

The deployment of the thin clients enabled KIBAG to not only save time and costs for IT management, but also to improve the working conditions. N500 allows the display of multimedia content and high resolution graphics and enables them to perform demanding tasks, while supporting two monitors with wireless connection.

“Our employees can benefit from the new devices in two ways,” said Christian Schollenberger, manager of IT processes at KIBAG. “They accepted the new devices due to the high performance and they can access their data anytime, anywhere. As a company we are very happy with the easy to use solutions and the low cost of launching for the N500.”

KIBAG is currently planning to extend the virtualisation platform in order to replace as many portable computers as possible with N500 devices.



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About NComputing

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