

Success story: Ecorys

Affordable HDX™-Ready Thin Clients Open Doors to High Performance VDI for European Policy Gurus

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UK IT manager
Ecorys

Key Benefits

- Maximises investment in Citrix® VDI
- Provides better end user experience
- Multimedia and unified comms support
- Enables more productive flexible working
- Built in data security
- Sustainable computing delivering power savings

Ecorys is a premier player in the provision of research, evaluation, consultancy and technical assistance services to the public, private and third sectors, working closely with national governments including the UK government, policymakers and the European Commission.

The challenge – provide more sustainable, secure and flexible computing for demanding knowledge workers

In the UK, Ecorys had a patchwork of older desktop PCs and servers that were increasingly unreliable, putting serious pressure on a small UK IT team who had to support end users in offices nationwide.

Staff who are highly skilled experts tended to work remotely and moved regularly between offices on assignments for their public and private sector clients.

As a supplier of research and consultancy on environmental policy issues, Ecorys itself was required to demonstrate how the business was reducing carbon emissions when it bid for new contracts. This led the company to investigate any opportunities for sustainable computing.

Implementing desktop virtualisation with the N-series

An Ecorys sister company in the Netherlands already used older virtual desktops from Wyse. But the UK team decided against the Wyse option and chose instead to take advantage of more modern HDX-ready thin client technology.

Paul Maturi, the UK IT manager explains: “We wanted to future proof the new infrastructure and maximise Citrix’s HDX technology for its long term multimedia and unified communications potential. The key for us was how could we do this most cost effectively because we were completely replacing the entire infrastructure overnight. So the combined affordability and HDX support of the **N-series** made our goal of giving everyone HDX and access to rich media applications from day one feasible.”

The choice of **N-series** thin clients for Citrix® HDX™ also met a strong unified communications requirement. Ecorys does a lot of work in developing countries and needed thin clients that could support voice over IP communications between Ecorys and team members or clients abroad. The **N500** answers this and its support for full HD 1080p client-side rendering and acceleration allows Ecorys to plan for desktop video conferencing.

More than one hundred **N500** thin clients are now live in Ecorys offices in the UK including London, Birmingham and Leeds in addition to several devices in Brussels and Rotterdam. The VDI utilises Citrix Xen App and allows to access to personal desktops, applications and data running on HP ProLiant servers at the main data centre in Birmingham.

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Hot-desking for more productive working

The *NComputing* and Citrix® VDI solution has enabled a fully flexible working environment with hot-desking supported in each Ecorys office. Everyone can log onto any **N500** in any office, making it easier for staff who were routinely working out of different offices.

Maturi adds: “The high performance of the **N500** thin client is essential to the success of our more productive working environment. Previously staff had got so used to poor PC performance that they knew start up took so long they had time to go into kitchen to make a drink. Now they can move between offices, switch on any terminal and be logged into their personal desktop on the Citrix® server within 10 seconds.”

Greater operational flexibility is achieved with increased data security. Centralising all data in the secure data centre means no data is stored on the **N500** thin clients anywhere even when consultants utilise the solution to work from home or elsewhere. The need for USBs and its inherent security risks has been eliminated by how successfully the *NComputing* solution enables consultants to access their personal desktop at different Ecorys locations.

The versatility of the **N500** is proving a success in many other ways. For example, the dual screen support is used by the administrative team when they transcribe consultants’ field notes. This is saving time and avoiding the need to print off documents needlessly.

Wins on support and sustainability goals

Maturi’s IT team has found support issues are significantly reduced because of the devices’ inherent robustness. When maintenance or trouble shooting is necessary, the infrastructure has become easier to manage overall with the **vSpace Management Center for N-series**. This is allowing the IT team based in Birmingham to remotely manage any **N500** nationwide, cutting time and expense previously wasted travelling out to offices. A back up supply of **N500** thin clients means a faulty unit can be swapped out and replaced in minutes by an end user with remote IT team assistance.

Ecorys is beginning to see the benefits of switching from PCs that used 90-100watts of power to a combination of thin clients, that consume only 5 watts of power, and low energy HP LED monitors. The fact that the **N500** has a much longer lifecycle than PCs and use fewer components reinforces the greater sustainability of the new infrastructure.

Streamlined computing helps business respond to change

Ecorys is a highly dynamic business and expects its new ICT infrastructure to help the consultancy respond to new opportunities in the future.

Maturi says: “Often when we win a new contract we need to set up a new office on a short lease near our public sector clients. The *NComputing* thin clients will allow us to get a new office’s IT up and running very quickly and with little fuss. The technology is ready to go and with a good Internet connection our staff can simply plug a device in and get started. This tremendous flexibility also simplifies matters when we need to scale down our operations when the contract ends.”

NComputing N-series are now essential tools for Ecorys knowledge workers in the UK, paving the way for plans to refresh its thin client strategy across the rest of the organisation in Europe and beyond.