

RES Workspace Manager Enables Lutheran Services in Iowa to Consolidate User Profiles Across 18 Office Environments into One Central Management Console

Overview

For the last 150 years, Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) has impacted the lives of tens of thousands of Iowans annually through residential treatment, services to families, home health care, early childhood programs, adoption/foster care services, refugee services, services for people with disabilities, disaster response initiatives and mental health services. More than 1,000 employees at LSI travel among the organization's 18 office locations and across all 99 counties in Iowa to deliver these services, requiring secure access to their desktops from a variety of locations.

Situation

Seven years ago, Lutheran Social Service of Iowa (LSS) had about 600 employees in scattered locations who all worked in a native IT environment with a virtual private network, or VPN. LSS merged with an organization named Bremwood Lutheran Children's Home to form Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) in 2003. Bremwood's IT environment was a purely Citrix environment, and so integrating its system with the current Lutheran Social Services system appeared to be a challenge. The merger also expanded the number of employees and locations that would now need to be controlled by a single IT team. The LSI IT staff knew that they needed a solution that would allow them to control and manage the whole infrastructure simultaneously, as well as prevent any issues that might arise as future updates were made to the entire desktop environment.

Roger Riggins was hired as LSI's network

administrator, and his first task was to tackle the need for consolidation. Riggins' background was in IT consulting, so he was familiar with several products on the market that would help to solve the challenges LSI was facing.

Solution

Integrating both systems following the merger was the first important task LSI looked to accomplish with RES Workspace Manager.

"After becoming acclimated with LSI's IT environment and related challenges, including the need for a centrally managed IT environment, I knew that only a solution with the capabilities offered by RES Workspace Manager would fit the bill,"

“RES Software solutions have become a critical component of our evolving IT infrastructure. They give us the extra flexibility we need to be more dynamic and creative with our applications and desktops, as well as prepare us for seamless upgrades and changes to our IT environment in the future.”

– Roger Riggins, Network Administrator

said Riggins. "I conducted extensive research into the various options and always came back to the same conclusion – RES Software products would provide the most benefit and value for LSI's customers. I knew that with RES Software we would have the added assurance that user productivity would be kept stable during upgrades to our system."

Effective desktop management is imperative to reduce strains on IT and user productivity remains constant as LSI continues to implement changes and update their infrastructure. Since LSI was able to control the management of their initial merged IT environment, they have been able to make ongoing upgrades and changes, including moving users to a virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), seamlessly and with confidence.

Since the merger, the organization has continued to grow and currently operates



out of 18 different office locations in a mixed IT environment, including both physical and virtual desktops.

RES Software separates the desktop from the operating system, automating the management, creation and dynamic composition of user workspaces for each and every employee. It simplifies the configuration of new applications and eases the addition/removal of new users, eliminating the need for scripting. It also provides users with a unified desktop, masking changes from the user so that every time they log on, they have the same experience, no matter where they are logging on from. Riggins and his IT team are now able to securely provide each user with the applications, data, printing and personalized settings that they need while in any of the 18 different offices, or while providing home care across the state. This saves LSI's employees time and maintains their productivity as they travel around helping people improve their own lives.

"Security and documentation is one of the biggest concerns in our industry, as we are highly regulated due to patient privacy laws," says Riggins. "With RES Workspace Manager, this is no longer a concern as it is done for us automatically. The software also logs when attempts are made to download or access unauthorized applications, and even monitors any errors a user may receive to help our IT staff resolve the problem, sometimes before a user even realizes anything is wrong. From a compliance perspective, this is huge for us."



One of the additional features that LSI has found to be necessary is the solution's Virtual Desktop Extender (VDX) technology, which is critical in the successful deployment of virtual desktops because it enhances the remote desktop experience by enabling local applications. This means that the local applications that end users rely on can be merged with a remote desktop into a single user workspace, eliminating the need to switch between two sessions and thereby increasing end user productivity, without compromising the manageability benefits of VDI. This feature becomes extremely useful in providing end users working on remote desktops access to applications that typically do not run smoothly, or at all, in a virtual environment, such as imaging software.

"Remote workers are always amazed at being able to login from any location on any device and have the same desktop experience as they do right in the office," says Riggins. "We don't have to worry that each of our employees will be able to access the applications they need to do the job, in a secure environment, anywhere they may be helping people across Iowa."

Benefit

RES Workspace Manager provided the essential capabilities needed for LSI to transform traditional static desktops into dynamic user workspaces. This transformation is made possible using live data and a step-by-step approach that minimizes risk and impact to the desktop user. This process is driven by a suite of modelling tools that give LSI the ability to analyze, design and test transformation projects such as large-scale migrations to Windows 7 and desktop virtualization, prior to implementation. This ensures a more seamless roll-out and minimizes the impact on end-user productivity.

Today, the organization's more than 1,000 employees are able to focus on their core business objective, helping people in their times of need, without worrying about security and documentation issues that are involved in their highly regulated line of work. Users feel no impact as system-wide upgrades or changes are made. They are also able to login anywhere and at any time with complete access to their personalized desktop and user-settings, enhancing overall productivity.

“Remote workers are always amazed at being able to login from any location on any device and have the same desktop experience as they do right in the office.”

– Roger Riggins, Network Administrator

"RES Software solutions have become a critical component of our evolving IT infrastructure," says Riggins. "Upgrading to the latest version will give us the extra flexibility we need to be more dynamic and creative with our applications and desktops, as well as prepare us for seamless upgrades and changes to our IT environment in the future."

Additional benefits of RES Software workspace management for LSI include:

- **Management Ease**
With RES Software, LSI has central control over the performance of all user workspaces, wherever they are in the network.
- **Easy installation and configuration**
All the personalization, security and reliability rules are stored in a single database and managed from a central console.

- **Consistency for users**
Personalization can be applied to application access and customization of a desktops look and feel and environment gives users their own personalized workspace where and when they need it, with their settings always available.
- **Faster access**
Just-in-Time Personalization™ from RES Software delivers personalized workspaces to users with faster login times because users receive the necessary settings as an application is launched, not all at once during the logon process.

Future Plans

In 2010, LSI upgraded to the latest version of RES Workspace Manager in order to utilize the solution's centralized management console to streamline both current and future changes to its mixed IT environment including physical and virtual infrastructures across its 18 offices.

Riggins comments that RES Software really takes the time to consider the suggestions and needs of the solution's users.

"I personally requested one particular feature that would have made management of access levels and users simpler, and it was incorporated into the next version of the solution," he says. "As the feature set of Workspace Manager continues to grow, there is no doubt RES Software will be listening to IT administrators and taking into account their needs. This is a smart approach to product development and as an IT professional, I appreciate that dedication to the needs of our field. It is a big part of why we'll continue to work with RES Software as new solutions are delivered to market."

About RES Software

RES Software, the proven leader in dynamic desktop solutions, is driving a transformation in the way today's organizations manage and reduce the cost of their desktop infrastructure. Designed for physical, server-based computing environments or virtual desktop platforms, RES Software enables IT professionals to centrally manage, automate and deliver secure, personalized, context-aware and less complex desktops for any user. For more information, follow updates on Twitter @RESSoftware and visit www.ressoftware.com.