

Background

Statnett is Norway's national main grid owner and operator. Statnett is primarily responsible for all high voltage electricity transmission and distribution in Norway. Distribution is mainly from the country's main hydro-electric power production plants countrywide. The main grid consists of approximately 10,000 km of high voltage transmission lines, as well as numerous transformer and connector stations. Statnett is not responsible for the generation of electricity itself, but for ensuring that the electricity reaches the regional distributors, and thereby the end-user, at all times. Statnett is also appointed to the role of Norway's Transmission System Operator (TSO), with an overall responsibility of coordinating the operation of the country's electric power system, maintaining correct balance between supply and demand at all times. In doing so, Statnett also regulates all electric power exchanged with other national grid systems abroad, primarily involving those of the other Nordic grid system operators.

The Statnett Group has more than 850 employees and their corporate office is located at Smestad in the western suburbs of Oslo. Statnett is a technology-driven company that relies on state-of-the-art information and communication technology solutions, and as a result more than ten percent of all staff are in the ICT division.

"Our aim is to lead in Europe in terms of efficient transmission of electricity. This also governs how we develop and run our ICT-systems," said Section Engineer Bjørn Willy Løkken.

The Challenge

The ICT-department is responsible for delivering services to more than 1,000 users at 150 locations. Citrix XenApp is

used to deliver applications to users across the country using many different network lines. The company has more than 1,200 end user devices, both PCs and laptops. Statnett uses both HP and Dell servers, and the Citrix environment runs mainly on Dell.

With such a large and fragmented organization comprised of users with separate and demanding responsibilities, the ICT-department felt that they needed solutions that simplified user workspace management. This especially would reduce the need for developing fixes, scripting and tailor-made solutions adapted to each user. They also needed better insight, more standardization on the desktop and easier and simpler routines and procedures.

"Previously we configured many special fixes within the solutions, scripted extensively and made manual changes for each user. We lacked control and overview, and spent vast amounts of time developing point solutions for each user. The risk of human error was big, and security was a concern," said Løkken.

"I only use 50 percent of my time to manage our 800 Citrix users. This would not be possible without RES Software. I can spend time innovating and improving services, as opposed to putting out fires and handling tedious repetitive tasks"

— Bjørn Willy Løkken, Section Engineer for Statnett

"We needed a solution that gave us better user workspace management and more transparency in our processes. Put simply, we wanted to track changes to reduce dependency on manual transfer of knowledge. We wanted a system

that ensured that person B could continue where person A left off," said Løkken.

Statnett also wanted a standardized and flexible user environment where users received the same desktop regardless of the device they use, or where they are located. They invested therefore in RES Workspace Manager in 2005 to improve administration of the Windows-based desktop environment.



"It gave us a complete framework for user workspace management. Through an intuitive interface, we have full control over all users and applications. RES Software complements Citrix very well."

The Solution

The team's experiences with the administration tool are very good. It's out of the question to replace it. User workspace management, which in many cases consumes a large part of an ICT-budget, has become a small cost, hardly worth mentioning.

"We only use half a head count to administrate all our Citrix users. This would not have been possible without Workspace Manager," said Løkken.

Without this solution, one would have needed two staff handling the Citrix environment full time. The savings constitute therefore over a million NOK (more than \$170,000) each year just in reduced staff costs.

"RES Workspace Manager has enabled me to take on new tasks," said Løkken that now handles the VMware servers in addition to the Citrix environment.

"A work day without Workspace Manager would have been more complex and less productive as well as not having oversight of the user environment."

Amongst many advantages, he highlights easier administration, no scripting, increased flexibility, better oversight, transparent processes and that users get workspaces that increase their productivity. He also states that the tool is well-suited for migration processes, since the



workspace is virtualized with Workspace Manager. This allows IT-administrators to replace the underlying platform without having to perform the same tasks twice.

“I can now go on holiday without being interrupted. Others in the ICT-department can take over the responsibility for the user environment while I am away,” he said.

Advanced Functionality

According to Løkken a key feature is the Appguard functionality.

“Appguard allows us to block software that has not been approved by the ICT-department. It would not allow any installation packages or downloaded to software to run, and especially

many Trojans/viruses. This is a huge benefit for us, and its weight can be measured in gold. It saves us from many error reports, and we less frequently need to reinstall servers, he said.

“The administration interface in Workspace Manager is easy to work with. I believe the product is excellent and have a hard time seeing how they can improve it in terms of functionality. I would truly recommend it. All companies can benefit from deploying it,” said Løkken. He states that especially companies that run App-V and have many published applications should consider it.

“It’s quick and easy to deploy new software in the user environment. Distribution to the users happens within seconds,” he said.

Considering Automation

Statnett is planning to test RES Automation Manager to simplify server administration. With Automation Manager, tasks can be automated to perform in sequence (run book automation) on all devices and servers. Tasks that previously took hours can be solved in seconds without the risk of human errors.

“ We are about to start testing. In our closed networks there are machines that are not in domains. This makes administration more difficult and unpredictable. Automation Manager will give us a centralized point of administration, which will allow us to run maintenance and upgrades in batches,” said Løkken.

About RES Software

RES Software, the proven leader in dynamic desktop solutions, is driving a transformation in the way organizations manage, maintain and reduce the cost of their desktop infrastructure. The RES Software award-winning, patented products enable IT professionals to manage and deliver secure, personalized and compliant desktops independent of the underlying computing infrastructure – thin clients, virtual desktops, physical desktops, or server-based computing environments. The company empowers customers, from small to medium-sized businesses to global enterprises, to reduce desktop complexity and meet the essential needs of a dynamic workforce that requires on-demand access to their personalized workspaces. For more information, follow updates on Twitter @RESSoftware and visit www.ressoftware.com.