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(JR Higashi Nihon Kikaku)

Converting computers into thin clients establishes a secure remote access environment – a work style innovation that makes sales staff more efficient.

At a glance

Country: Japan
Industry: Communications and Media
Founded: 1988
Website: jeki.co.jp

Challenge

- Use a flexible, efficient way of working to reduce the amount of overtime
- Need a stylish, lightweight, slim, and secure thin client
- Install VDI in line with the introduction of a hot desk system

Solution

Fujitsu implemented a Virtual Desktop Infrastructure to enable remote access with guaranteed security, by creating thin clients to prevent data from being saved on devices.

Benefit

- Employee working hours dramatically reduced, and efficiency in client interactions improved
- Converted fat clients into thin clients, maximizing both security and convenience
- Created a secure VDI in just two months, utilizing the existing network

Customer

East Japan Marketing & Communications, Inc. (JR Higashi Nihon Kikaku) is the advertising agency of the East Japan Railway Company (JR East). It handles aspects as an advertising agency and media company in charge of planning and managing digital signage in JR train stations and onboard trains. The company also boasts strengths in research on Suica business and station consumption, studies on commuters in large cities, and its own business development utilizing its relationship with JR East.

Products and Services

FUJITSU VDI Solution:

- FUJITSU Notebook LIFEBOOK U745
- FUJITSU Managed Infrastructure Service FENICS II
- FUJITSU Managed Infrastructure Service FENICS II Universal Connect
- VMware Horizon



Inability to use computer systems externally puts extra burden on employees

East Japan Marketing & Communications, Inc. (JR Higashi Nihon Kikaku aka jeki) is a company with three faces: it is an exclusive agency for East Japan Railway Company (JR East), a media company that manages the onboard advertisements for JR East, and an advertising agency. JR East is a major player in Japan's public transport industry, and as a member of the JR East group, jeki is required to adhere to a strict security policy regarding its ICT use. Therefore, jeki employees were only permitted to use their computers while at the office, and the company network could not be accessed from external locations. This rule created excessive burden for employees, especially those in the sales department who spend a lot of time visiting clients. "Just say a staff member went out of town on a business trip, and his client requested something from him. Even if it was just a simple request, if the issue required access to internal data, the employee would not be able to respond until he got back to the office. Our employees felt this was obstructing their work, and it also increased the overtime hours they worked. As a company we identified it as a problem that needed addressing," says Masato Mukoyama, Acting Department Head, Information Systems Department, Corporate Strategy & Planning Division.

The company was also beginning digitalization work aiming to create a paperless office. The sales department was due to have its computers replaced, and discussion began on introducing a hot desk system. Employees were usually issued with desktop computers, so these needed to be switched to easily portable laptops. In addition, many sales staff worked with clients located far from the office, and there was a desire to enable remote access to the company infrastructure.

Creating thin clients using VDI

A pilot phase was launched for 100 members of the sales department. Seventy of these staff were issued with new laptops to use in the hot desk system, and the remaining 30 were given access to the company infrastructure from outside the office. VDI was the chosen platform for this. Fujitsu's goal was to enable remote access with guaranteed security, by creating thin clients to prevent data from being saved on the devices. "In line with jeki's security policy, we needed a reliable verification process, a secure data network, and a guarantee that data would not be stored on employees' computers," explains Mukoyama.

jeku sought proposals from Fujitsu and several other vendors. Fujitsu was chosen for its excellent track record in VDI, and its hardware that met security requirements and work site needs. "Our development schedule was extremely tight, so we needed to work with people who we trusted, who understood our unique situation and who trusted us as well." Fujitsu had previously worked on a separate system installation project for jeki, and jeki was extremely happy with Fujitsu's work. Plus, Fujitsu boasts an extensive track record in client virtualization solutions, holding the number one domestic share*. Mukoyama says that when observing Fujitsu's work in the past, the high skill level of the Fujitsu system engineers impressed him.

jeku wanted lightweight, slim, easily portable computers, with the assumption that they would be thin clients. Further, computers of A4 size were needed to prevent reductions in workability due to screens being too small. In addition, being an advertising agency, importance was placed on having a stylish-looking computer. But an A4 size, lightweight, stylish, thin client computer simply did not exist.

The other vendors only proposed thin client computers, but Fujitsu came up with the idea of using fat clients and turning them into thin clients. The 14.0-inch widescreen FUJITSU Notebook LIFEBOOK U745/M offered HDD and USB port use, and was also capable of prohibiting access to functions that change computer settings such as the control panel, meaning it could be used as a complete thin client computer. "Employees just use the display port to give their presentations, but the computers are set up so that no data is stored on the device itself," says Mukoyama. Further requirements included a three-year warranty, next-day onsite support, and lack of frequent OS version updates.

jeku was already using FUJITSU Managed Infrastructure Service FENICS II for its smartphone internal line network and email remote access network, and FUJITSU Managed Infrastructure Service FENICS II Universal Connect for its mobile connection service. These secure network and domain verification functions were utilized for the project as well. In less than two months Fujitsu established the necessary environment, providing a complete package of VDI creation using VMware Horizon, hardware, and the network.

Positive user feedback and a reduction in overtime

jeku conducted a user survey a month after introduction. "There were almost no negative responses," says Mukoyama. "Employees liked the fact that they were able to create cost estimates and send them to clients immediately after receiving their requests, a task which they were not able to do before. This made our clients happy as well."

A calculation of working hours showed that the amount of overtime had been greatly reduced, and that work efficiency had improved. The hot desk system was also popular, with employees commenting that they were able to have meetings with colleagues from other departments in the colleagues' office space. "It is still quite rare for an advertising company to use a hot desk system, and it's had a positive impact on our branding as a company," says Mukoyama. "It gives us a good reason to invite clients to come and see what our workplace is like."

jeku plans to expand its hot desk system and VDI where necessary. Forty additional VDI licenses have already been prepared, and other jeku departments are beginning further trials. Mukoyama says that while they do not intend to introduce VDI for all their computers, jeku plans to make it available to all employees that need it. "We are also examining the types of work styles that best increase results in the most efficient way, and undertaking a general review of issues including our regulations. While working on this, we hope to utilize the VDI we introduced this time, and pursue an even better way of working."

FUJITSU

Contact a representative at: AskFujitsu@uk.fujitsu.com

*Source: IDC Japan "Domestic client virtualization solutions (on-premises) sales share for market and vendor, 2016"

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