

Powerco maximizes Citrix server utilization with AppSense



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Huw Griffiths
Powerco's Infrastructure Manager



INTRODUCTION

Powerco is New Zealand's second largest electricity and gas distribution company. It's network area spreads across the upper central and lower central North Island servicing approximately 400,000 consumers representing 46 per cent of the gas connections and 16 per cent of the electricity connections in New Zealand.

BACKGROUND CHALLENGES

For a company with 220 employees, Powerco knew that maintaining, powering and cooling over 140 servers throughout its IT infrastructure was an extravagant waste of resources. To compound the problem, the servers were all between five and ten years old and in need of replacement.

Using the inevitable need to replace the servers as a motivator, Huw Griffiths, Powerco's Infrastructure Manager decided it was time Powerco looked at alternative ways of organizing its IT infrastructure;

“It was ridiculous for us to continue supporting 140 under-used physical servers, particularly when the technology is aging and we were likely to have to buy more servers to support the growing number of contractors and employees that needed access.”

Powerco addressed the situation on three levels. Firstly, they looked to replace their legacy hardware with HP blade technology.

“Switching to HP blade technology certainly saved us a considerable amount of space and we knew that blade technology would result in a dramatic reduction in energy consumption - a problem that is always top-of-mind when you are dealing with physical servers,” said Griffiths.

The second step involved virtualizing a lot of the infrastructure using VMware.

“Given that we have over 700 contractors using a variety of applications, virtualizing the infrastructure was always on the agenda. However we did not want to virtualize our whole infrastructure as 47 of our servers were running on Citrix, a platform we decided not to virtualize at that time”.

Finally, Powerco faced the challenge of making the hardware they had supporting the Citrix applications more efficient, while still maintaining the same services.

THE INTRODUCTION OF APPSENSE



Virtualization was the answer for consolidating a number of Powerco's servers, but they did not feel it was the right solution to consolidate the growing number of Citrix servers. Instead,

Powerco turned to AppSense to see how AppSense Performance Manager could achieve the same result of maximum server consolidation.

Griffiths comments;

“The blades and VMware implementation went smoothly, but we knew our 47 Citrix servers were still not running at full capacity. We spoke to AppSense about how we could squeeze more users onto servers without the need to virtualize or compromise business critical applications and AppSense responded with a solution that was easy to implement, manage and sat well within our Citrix infrastructure.”

Challenge

- > Reduce hardware by consolidating servers
- > Consolidate Citrix servers without virtualizing infrastructure
- > Maintain performance of business critical applications

Solution

- > AppSense Performance Manager
- > HP blade technology
- > Virtualized with VMware

Benefits

- > Maximum use of server resources
- > Application resource control
- > Reduced hardware and maintenance costs
- > Server consolidation in Citrix environment without the need to virtualize

“When we decided to overhaul our entire IT infrastructure, we knew there would not be a ‘one size fits all’ solution. AppSense was able to fill a very specific void in our infrastructure and meet our key objective of improving server capacity without virtualizing the Citrix environment.”

Huw Griffiths,
Powerco's Infrastructure Manager



AppSense Performance Manager enables a huge increase in server capacity by reducing the number of resources required to run desktops and applications within the datacenter. Using AppSense Performance Manager, Powerco was able to identify resource intensive applications and limit the resource available to them, ensuring enough capacity for every user on the server. Even with more users on the server, AppSense Performance Manager also achieves benefits of reduced power consumption, cooling and hardware costs - financial gains akin to those achieved by virtualization - across the entire infrastructure.

“AppSense helped us reduce our 47 Citrix servers down to 25. Not only do we have more users than ever on our existing hardware, but we have not had to compromise or restrict any of the Citrix applications. Most importantly - we did not have to virtualize our infrastructure to achieve this, which was a key aim for us.”

said Griffiths.

Griffiths concludes:

“When we decided to overhaul our entire IT infrastructure, we knew there would not be a ‘one size fits all’ solution. AppSense was able to fill a very specific void in our infrastructure and meet our key objective of improving server capacity without virtualizing the Citrix environment.”

NETWORK ENVIRONMENT

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