

Case study

Major healthcare provider protects against natural disasters and ensures 24/7 desktop access with AppSense



“After researching a number of user virtualization solutions, we chose AppSense because it worked in heterogeneous environments, provided effective management of multiple delivery mechanisms”

Landon Winburn,
Software Systems Specialist, University of Texas Medical Branch



Challenges

- Heterogeneous desktop environment
- Thousands of users
- Remote workers
- Slow logon times
- Maximize use of hardware

Solution

- AppSense Environment Manager

Benefits

- Scalability to support thousands of users
- Desktop personalization
- Faster logon times
- More satisfied user experience
- Server utilization

Serving Texans since 1891, the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB) is a leading academic medical center dedicated to health science education, high-quality patient care, cutting-edge research and service to the community. Hundreds of thousands of patients from Galveston and beyond seek care at UTMB every year. UTMB is home to the oldest schools of medicine, nursing and allied health sciences in the state and has trained more Texas physicians than any other medical school.

UTMB's inpatient facilities in Galveston are recognized among the top four percent of hospitals nationwide to have earned Magnet Recognition for nursing excellence. UTMB also operates the Austin Women's Hospital in Austin, Texas, as well as an extensive network of campus and community-based clinics that offer primary and specialty care to serve the health needs of Texans across the state.

UTMB is responsible for the lives of hundreds of patients each day, so it is imperative the IT department is equipped with resources to provide faculty members and staff access to patients' medical records at all times.

Background challenges

In September 2008, after Hurricane Ike caused a major power outage at UTMB leaving people without access to the main facility for days, the IT department realized they needed a method to remotely deliver desktops to the end-user from any location. The hurricane left UTMB without access to one of its most critical applications, the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system. The EMR system makes patient data readily available to clinicians by storing it in one centralized location that can be accessed no matter where the patient is being treated.

“After Hurricane Ike left the IT department with waterlogged systems and clinicians were unable to use any applications, we recognized the need for virtualization,” said Landon Winburn, Software Systems Specialist for UTMB's Information Services department.

“Giving our employees 24-hour access to the main facility is extremely important, especially in our line of work where staying connected at all times can be the difference between saving a life or not.”

Desktop virtualization deployment

After Hurricane Ike, UTMB purchased 100 Citrix XenDesktop licenses to begin its virtual desktop deployment. UTMB turned to desktop virtualization for a number of reasons including its ability to allow employees to access their desktop from anywhere and to ease virtual IT support. Virtualization allowed UTMB to manage desktops in locations where they could not have accessed prior. In addition, they were looking for the flexibility with desktop virtualization that allowed updates to be made to the corporate operating system and applications on-demand.

“After we began converting PCs into virtual machines, we began realizing enormous time savings as we no longer had to keep running to individual PCs whenever there was a problem or corporate applications needed to be updated,” said Winburn.

AppSense.com
iwanttoknowmore@AppSense.com

“AppSense Environment Manager has decreased login times from minutes to seconds and has also made them more consistent. All of the benefits we have received with AppSense and the ability for the user to have their personal desktop every time they logon have dramatically increased end-user satisfaction.”

Landon Winburn,
Software Systems Specialist,
University of Texas Medical Branch

We were also familiar with the management tools as we chose XenDesktop due to our pre-existing XenApp environment, and have been extremely happy with the results as XenDesktop delivers desktops extremely fast; however, they simply lacked the level of personalization we were looking for.”

The introduction of AppSense

Landon and his team turned to AppSense Environment Manager to help solve their end-user personalization issues and to increase end-user satisfaction.

In conjunction with XenDesktop, UTMB found that in addition to dramatically decreasing user logon times, AppSense Environment Manager delivered the scalability it required by supporting thousands of users, the flexibility in heterogeneous environments and the performance that enhanced versus detracted from the user experience.

“After researching a number of user virtualization solutions, we chose AppSense because it worked in heterogeneous environments, provided effective management of multiple delivery mechanisms, featured an extensive group policy feature and provided a consistent desktop to our employees which looked identical to their physical PC.”

Upon implementation of AppSense's solutions, UTMB experienced server optimization, going from 40 to 80 users per XenApp server, as well as a dramatic decrease in profile corruption.

“One of the major pain points we consistently experienced was profile corruption which prior to AppSense Environment Manager occurred up to 10 times a day. AppSense eliminated corruption which now is almost non-existent. This has drastically cut the time we in the IT department had previously spent monitoring errant roaming profiles to spot potential problems and has also eliminated roaming profiles from growing to 3 gigabytes, which has ultimately decreased storage costs.”

AppSense Environment Manager also addressed UTMB's long login times. “AppSense Environment Manager has decreased login times from minutes to seconds and has also made them more consistent. All of the benefits we have received with AppSense and the ability for the user to have their personal desktop every time they logon have dramatically increased end-user satisfaction.”

UTMB is planning to continue rolling out virtual desktops and will continue to use AppSense to address the problems addressed above.

“The IT department at UTMB is dedicated to delivering a richer end-user experience, giving our employees the ability to have access to more applications and solutions while maintaining control and quality of service. AppSense's technology has enabled us to deliver a richer user environment and we are looking forward to the benefits we continue to receive.”

About AppSense

We are the leading provider of user virtualization technology to enterprise organizations. User virtualization is a way of managing user-specific information independent of the desktop, and applying this information into any desktop (local install, virtualized, published, streamed etc) on-demand. This enables IT to standardize the desktop build, automate desktop and application delivery, and migrate users to new desktops – all while ensuring the user experience is seamless, personal, predictable and easily manageable.