

# Desktop virtualization

## The Co-operative



Case study: Retail

## The Co-operative Group selects AppSense and achieved:

- New desktop virtualization environment



**“AppSense allows us to have control over our physical and virtual desktops while ensuring end user satisfaction.”**

Ian Cawson,  
Technical Architect at The  
Co-operative Group

**Based in Manchester, England, The Co-operative Group is the world’s largest consumer-owned business with over 4.5 million members and 123,000 employees across the organization.**

In addition to increased management, the company looked to desktop virtualization to help them develop a flexible working strategy in order for employees to have access to their desktop at all times and from any location. Of the 3,000 virtual desktops, more than 1,000 of them will be strictly for remote workers.

“We needed to think about what solutions could deliver our users a reliable, personal desktop while also allowing us to increase desktop management,” stated Cawson. “With these goals in mind we chose AppSense as our comprehensive user virtualization solution to complement XenDesktop.”

### The introduction of AppSense

The Group has been using AppSense Environment Manager and AppSense Application Manager in their XenApp estate for the past six years so they were already extremely familiar with the products. However, for their virtual desktops, they also looked at RES PowerFuse, but in the end selected AppSense for a number of reasons in addition to their existing knowledge of the product.

“Although our AppSense implementation in our XenApp estate has been extremely successful, we still wanted to do our due diligence to ensure our new virtual desktop environment is most effective,” explained Cawson. “AppSense allows us to have control over our physical and virtual desktops while ensuring end user satisfaction.”

The Co-operative Group is a family of businesses led by its principles and owned by its members. Each of the members has an equal right to a say in how the business is run and how its social goals are achieved. With strong market positions in banking and insurance, the Group also has the fifth largest food retailer, the third largest retail pharmacy chain, the largest independent provider of funeral services and the largest independent travel business.

### Background challenges

The Co-operative Group is rapidly expanding and is currently building a new state-of-the-art headquarters expected to be completed by 2012. In an effort to reduce the carbon footprint of this new office, the Group chose Citrix XenDesktop to virtualize their desktops.

“Our environment now runs Citrix XenServer and Microsoft Hyper-V, but we always knew we wanted to implement desktop virtualization in our new offices as a way to decrease our carbon footprint while simultaneously increasing IT management and offering streamlined support,” said Ian Cawson, Technical Architect at The Co-operative Group.

“After conducting a successful 250 user pilot with XenDesktop, we realized that we could achieve both of these things and plan to roll out over 3,000 virtual desktops over the next two years.”

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### Challenges

- Seamless user experience across all physical and virtual desktops
- Increase manageability of the desktop
- Support remote workers
- Decrease cost

### Solution

- AppSense Application Manager
- AppSense Environment Manager

### Benefits

- Reduced licensing costs
- Decreased management costs
- Increased desktop manageability
- Increase in flexibility for remote workers

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### Benefits of AppSense

For a number of years, AppSense Environment Manager has allowed The Co-operative Group to effectively manage user profiles in their XenApp environment and is now carrying the technology over to all desktops in their mixed environment. In addition, AppSense Environment Manager is enabling the Group to provide their end users with a consistent and reliable desktop at each logon.

“Deploying desktop virtualization can be a huge risk in terms of end-user satisfaction, and that can either make or break the pilot,” stated Cawson. “That is why we knew we needed a solution layered on top of XenDesktop that gives us more control over the desktops, but also delivers the same experience to users regardless of how their desktop is being delivered.”

Additionally, with the rapid expansion of the company and the increase in remote workers, the Group was looking for a solution that gave their users the flexibility and agility they required to be most effective.

“With over one-third of our head office employees working remotely, we needed a solution that was able to deliver not just our corporate desktops, which is one of the reasons we turned to virtual desktops, but also a solution that delivered each user their personal desktop 24-7,” described Cawson. “AppSense Environment Manager delivers a personalized experience every time our users’ logon, making it impossible for them to decipher between a traditional PC and their virtual one.”

While the Group uses AppSense Environment Manager to increase the agility of their workers and reduce management costs, they use AppSense Application Manager to increase security and give IT the ability to lockdown the desktops and/or laptops of remote workers.

“Since an increasing number of our workers are accessing their desktop from a laptop, with AppSense Application Manager we have the ability to lockdown the desktops preventing users from being able to install any outside applications or devices,” stated Cawson. “AppSense Application Manager gives our employees access to the applications we approve, thereby allowing us to have complete control over all of the applications within our desktop environment.”

### Future Plans

Over the next two years, the Group will roll out AppSense user virtualization technology to over 3,000 virtual desktops and will continue this deployment as the company expands.

“We first started deploying AppSense and XenDesktop in The Co-operative headquarters, but the success we are experiencing means we are now looking to continue implementing AppSense and XenDesktop to our other departments,” concluded Cawson. “We are looking forward to what this new IT environment is going to do for our business and AppSense is helping us deliver a complete, personalized desktop to our users.”



### 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.