



GRINDEYS

case study

Cetus's advice and experience helps Grindeys cope with changing IT infrastructure requirements



Grindeys llp has a history dating back to the 19th century. Now, with 5 sites in Stoke and Stone it employs over 200 people and offers a wide range of legal services for businesses and individuals.

To support the increasing workloads and staff numbers, Grindeys have always been an enthusiastic user of IT to provide improved efficiency and customer service. This driver led them to implement a server-based computing solution back in 2002, making use of existing PCs to deliver applications to their users as well as providing central management of devices. Such an approach enabled Grindeys to increase the delivery of information to their users as well as improve the protection of their data.

After initial deployment of the system they encountered a number of problems that their existing supplier was unable to solve. This led them to look for a different partner, who had specific knowledge of designing and implementing Citrix solutions.

Neil Lench, IT Manager at Grindeys, takes up the story.

"After talking to a number of people in the industry, we were recommended to speak to Cetus Solutions Limited. They listened to what our problems were and what we wanted to do with our system and gave us a number of different options by which we could move forward. Their approach was what won us over, as they did not come in and tell us how to do things, but advised us as to the alternatives.

We were then able to make a decision as to how we wanted to progress and commissioned Cetus to carry out the work for us."

improving the infrastructure

Grindeys worked with Cetus to provide access to applications and data for staff at their remote offices using Citrix Access Gateway and Safeword strong authentication. Cetus consultants designed and implemented the solution to ensure secure and trouble-free access for all the users. With this in place they then set about optimising and rebuilding the Citrix server farm to improve performance and reliability while increasing the security of their company data.

Neil continued, "Once we had improved the infrastructure and access to the platform we set about improving the user experience, to enable them to improve their productivity. Initially, we had implemented Citrix using DOS clients, with Cetus' help we converted all these to utilise NFuse and allow users to more easily access their applications via a standard Web browser interface."

thin client technology

Recognising the advantages that thin client devices could bring, Grindeys then set about replacing their ageing PC clients with Neoware thin client devices and currently two thirds of their users are utilising these. *“Thin client devices are definitely the way we will be going in the future for a number of reasons”, said Neil. “Firstly, it now takes only a few minutes to setup a new thin client device and when you compare this with the average time of around 45 minutes that it takes to setup a desktop PC, the time savings soon mount up. Secondly, the benefits from an environmental perspective are also worth noting. In comparison to a PC, a thin client device is cheaper to run, generates very little heat, has a much smaller physical and carbon footprint, is silent in operation as well as being significantly lower in cost.*

Finally, with a PC we would have had to fix any problem at the user’s desk, impacting on their productivity. Now, with the centrally managed infrastructure, whenever there is a problem we take a new device out with us and swap it for the old one within a few minutes. We can then bring the device back to base and fix it without impacting the user. All this can be done in a fraction of the time that it took us previously.”

virtualisation

The flexibility of the new infrastructure has enabled Grindeys to take advantage of new technologies such as digital dictation. The central management and installation capabilities now allow all products, even one as specialised as digital dictation, to be quickly and easily setup by Grindeys IT staff.

Another problem that Cetus helped Grindeys overcome is one faced by many organisations in these days of exponentially growing data storage requirements. Increased requirements for compliance and the need to store historical data and e-mails are leading to a significant increase in the amount having to be spent on storage. Whereas, having separate servers for each application can seem to be the most effective solution, in many cases these expensive resources are greatly under utilised and are not efficient in operation.

Cetus were able to solve this problem by designing and implementing a Dell SAN with VMware to enable virtualisation.

Now some 3-4TB of data and applications are held on the main servers while VMware replicates everything in the background to a separate site. Such a configuration has not only helped to improve the disaster recovery capabilities of Grindeys, but has also greatly reduced hardware requirements while improving server utilisation.

“The SAN coupled with virtualisation not only provides us with hardware savings, but also greatly reduces the time we have to spend administering and backing up the system”, said Neil. “The overall savings in both time and money going forward provide a very compelling ROI and will ensure that we always have in place the right IT infrastructure to enable our staff to operate at maximum efficiency.”

on-demand applications

The relationship between Cetus and Grindeys continues to grow. *“We are now working with them to expand the SAN and implement Citrix Provisioning Server on all our workstations”, explained Neil. This project, will deliver both operating systems and applications on-demand from the network, enabling centralised IT management of desktops while also providing the uncompromised user experience of a full PC.*

“Right from the start, Cetus have been a true partner”, concluded Neil. “They look at our business and provide impartial advice and alternatives that are based around the business needs and budget rather than technical constraints or the latest thing. This has enabled us to make the right decisions on our investment and has ensured that IT has become a real enabler for our staff and the business.

I look forward to working with them for many years into the future as I know they will always provide us with the right advice, experience and support.”



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