



CHALLENGES

- Roaming profile environment led to bloated and corrupted profiles, resulting in lost productivity for end users
- Migration from Windows XP to Windows 7, and from XenApp 4.5 to XenApp 6.5
- How to create a consistent user experience, regardless of location or device

SOLUTION

- Ivanti Environment Manager

BENEFITS

- An easy-to-manage user environment in which policy management requires less than a tenth of the time as before
- A seamless Windows and XenApp migration that took less time and resources than projected
- A future-proofed enterprise for migrations to Windows 8 and new versions of Citrix

“Having everything centralized is a major improvement. What used to take hours now takes only seconds.”

— Alex Matel
Application Analyst
McCarthy Tétrault

McCarthy Tétrault LLP

McCarthy Tétrault eases Windows migration and creates consistent user experience with Ivanti

About McCarthy Tétrault LLP

McCarthy Tétrault provides a broad range of legal services, advising on large and complex assignments for Canadian and international interests. The firm has offices in Canada’s major commercial centers and in London, UK. Built on a unique model of collaboration, the firm brings its legal talent, industry knowledge and practice experience, wherever needed, to help clients achieve the results that are important to them.

Situation

McCarthy Tétrault LLP has more than 1,500 users and 1,900 workstations throughout its offices in Canada and the UK. The firm used a roaming profile environment to allow users to log on from various computers and get their same desktop and profile settings. However, the use of roaming profiles presented a series of challenges that resulted in frustration and loss of productivity for users and the IT department.

Bloated profiles resulted when users had a large number of customized settings and/or icons and documents on the desktop, or when folders that Windows used for temporary storage weren’t properly purged. The effect was long logon and logoff times, slow applications and tasks, and sluggish network performance.

When profiles became corrupted, the IT team was forced to delete and recreate the users’ profiles as a way to solve the issue — but that was tedious and time-consuming, and resulted in lost productivity for the user. It was also possible to lose data during the transfer process, which further compounded the issue.

Another challenge was that McCarthy Tétrault had two disparate systems that were not connected: Windows for the desktop and Citrix XenApp for remote users. This meant that users had separate profiles on each system. “It was difficult to explain to users that they could not always take their profile with them,” explains Alex Matei, Application Analyst for McCarthy Tétrault.

When McCarthy Tétrault made preparations to migrate from Windows XP to Windows 7 and XenApp 4.5 to 6.5, the IT team began to consider user virtualization as a means to ease the migration path and solve many of the issues created by roaming profiles.

Introduction to Ivanti

In order to tackle their roaming profiles and related issues, McCarthy Tétrault’s IT team began investigating alternative ways to manage user settings. Numerous internal discussions led to the decision that user virtualization and the ability to manage user settings independent of the desktop provided the best solution for the firm.

To begin the process of selecting the right user virtualization solution, McCarthy Tétrault’s IT team put together a matrix of requirements. Among the most important was profile fragmentation, which would allow application settings to reside separately, so that if something were to happen to one application, it would not disturb another. It would also allow archiving so that settings could be easily retrieved if corruption were to occur. Other crucial requirements were related to policy settings and personalization, the need for a comprehensive management console and the ability to scale across its multiple offices.



The new system also needed to allow the XenApp and the physical desktop environments to work together, a solution that worked in 32 bit and 64 bit in Windows 2003 and Windows 2008. In the end, McCarthy Tétrault needed to create a predictable user environment that would deliver a consistent experience, whether a user was accessing the system from the office or remotely, regardless of device. And the team would have to make the shift without creating any disruption or downtime to its users.

After building out the list of requirements, the IT team compiled a list of several user virtualization solution providers and scored each on its capabilities. Vendors were eliminated if they did not meet all of the requirements. Ultimately, Ivanti was the only vendor able to meet and exceed McCarthy Tétrault's rigorous scrutiny. In addition, the testing of Ivanti was a success and the installation was straightforward.

Ivanti Benefits

Ivanti Environment Manager decoupled all of McCarthy Tétrault's user settings away from the operating systems and applications, resulting in a fast and seamless migration to Windows 7 and XenApp 6.5. "The settings were already in Ivanti so when we applied them to Windows 7 and Citrix servers, everything was preconfigured and easily implemented," said Matei. "All that remained was to install apps, so our deployment time was reduced significantly. We were able to start our pilot more quickly than we anticipated, which decreased the staging server time from a couple of days to a couple of hours and added a greater level of consistency on our Citrix servers. This resulted in a 25% reduction of IT/labor costs for the migration."

The firm installed two Ivanti servers with load balancing, and runs the Ivanti database on a high-availability SQL server. They maintain six application groups that include Microsoft Office, Nuance and other applications, along with five other stand-alone applications. McCarthy Tétrault established one policy that includes more than 2,000 items applied to all desktops and one policy for its Citrix servers, and will eventually move to a single policy across the enterprise based on conditions.

Prior to Ivanti, the user environment was configured in multiple places: various Group Policy Objects, Logon Scripts and in the default user captured with the image. Maintaining that setup required rigorous discipline by the IT team in documenting and applying changes. With Ivanti, all user policy configurations are managed under a single pane of glass and according to Matei, managing it requires less than a tenth of the time than in the previous environment. Now, Matei says his team can ensure all desktop components are automatically configured and personalized based on the context and the needs of the user, regardless of location or device.

By managing the user as a separate layer, McCarthy Tétrault's IT department can better serve the needs of the user. In doing so, Matei says his team reduced costs and complexity while providing an improved personalized desktop experience for users.

"Having everything centralized is a major improvement," he says.

"We know exactly where to look if we need to change something. What used to take hours now takes only seconds."

McCarthy Tétrault's help desk team also praises the new system. Prior to Ivanti, the team was limited in its ability to serve users with troubled profiles, and was usually forced to delete them and start over. Now they can roll back users' preferences dynamically and preserve valuable settings, avoiding the need to delete and rebuild user profiles from scratch.

While McCarthy Tétrault has not yet laid out further plans using Ivanti, the team acknowledges that it has future-proofed the enterprise for migrations to Windows 8 and new versions of Citrix.

ABOUT IVANTI

Ivanti is the global leader in user environment management (UEM) with over 3,000 enterprise customers worldwide that have deployed to over 7 million desktops. Ivanti DesktopNow and DataNow enable IT teams to deliver the ultimate user experience and productivity across physical and virtual desktops while optimizing security and reducing operational and infrastructure costs. The company is headquartered in Sunnyvale, CA with offices around the world.

"The settings were already in Ivanti so when we applied them to Windows 7 and Citrix servers, everything was preconfigured and easily implemented. All that had to be done was the installation of apps, so that reduced our deployment time significantly."

— Alex Matei
Application Analyst
McCarthy Tétrault