

Ivanti Helps Auto Trader Make the Most of Infrastructure Upgrade



Challenges

- Support major infrastructure change and upgrade
- Simplify desktop estate management
- Improve user experience
- Achieve PCI compliance

Solution

Ivanti® DesktopNow

Ivanti Performance Manager

Benefits

- Accelerated configuration changes
- Eliminated reliance on group policies and logon scripts
- Reduced logon times
- Enabled PCI compliance
- Improved stability of hosted desktops

Long recognized as a print magazine, Auto Trader has been an entirely digital enterprise since 2013. Its trade services encompass all aspects of buying, selling, marketing, and managing automotive stock. With more than 300 in-house experts, Auto Trader works to make life easier for buyers and sellers of new and used vehicles. Sixty-five percent of UK used-car transactions involve Auto Trader.

When Auto Trader jettisoned its print publishing business for a purely digital business model, it also consolidated 17 offices into two—one in Manchester and one in London. IT relocated to Manchester and took the move as an opportunity to completely redesign its end-user computing infrastructure with a fresh foundation for future business growth. “We overhauled everything from the ground up,” says Mike Braid, an Auto Trader Senior Infrastructure Engineer.

While Auto Trader chose Citrix XenDesktop to support hot-desking for its contact center, its new infrastructure plans required improvements in other areas as well to enable IT to be a more proactive service to the business. “One of our challenges was responding to change requests,” Braid continues. “Changes to group policy would take weeks to test. Mapping drives or configuring browser settings were done with either group policies or logon scripts. A simple system change was a minimum of two or three days.”

When the IT team transitioned to a new Windows active directory domain for the move to Manchester, it wanted to improve logon performance and simplify desktop configuration and application settings management. But that meant eliminating old group policies and logon scripts that had been built and modified over several years by various teams.

Centralizing Desktop Configuration with Ivanti

“Before we deployed Ivanti, we were nearing 1,000 group policies for our old active directory domain,”

recalls Braid. “The logon scripts were about 2,500 lines. You can imagine the complexity of deployment and testing in that environment.”

Today with Ivanti deployed, Auto Trader has one central set of configuration files. The company can change and configure settings on the fly, and manage deployments in seconds instead of days or weeks. Now, the company has one group policy to handle wireless settings for laptops and has eliminated logon script. Ivanti provides a wizard-driven, point-and-click approach to desktop configuration. Virtually everything to do with end user computing is now done more efficiently via Ivanti.

“When things are complicated and you can’t respond quickly, mistakes are made,” Braid observes. “But we’re not writing lines of code anymore, we’re checking a box. And if a mistake is made, we can rectify it quickly.”

Of course, for users, logon times are the acid test of a responsive desktop. “Before Ivanti, we were told regularly that people would enter their logon credential, leave their desk for a break and return—still waiting to log on,” Braid says. “We’re talking five, six, seven, eight minutes—sometimes even longer—to log on. Not only was that an unacceptable length of time, security could also be compromised by leaving a desktop unattended. We’ve got that down to about 35 seconds max.”

Ivanti also simplified break-fix scenarios. “Before Ivanti, if a user’s desktop failed, it would be a full day to get that user back up. That’s a full day of downtime,” Braid emphasizes. “Now with Citrix XenDesktop and Ivanti, they’re back up in probably 30 seconds—with no intervention from IT.”

Managing PCI Compliance with Ivanti

The Auto Trader contact center employs a hosted infrastructure that supports three web browsers: Internet Explorer, Chrome, and Firefox. Users choose browsers based on compatibility with the applications their work requires.

The contact center voice system records calls for customer service and internal quality-control purposes. However, to meet PCI compliance regulations, when agents access the credit card details page of Auto Trader’s internal billing application during a call, that part of the call must not be

recorded. An application on the agent’s desktop monitors the call and pauses the recording when the agent goes to the card details page within their web browser. This prevents the storing of credit card information. Once an agent leaves that page, the call resumes.

The call-pause application worked well for agents using Internet Explorer, but not for those using Chrome and Firefox. “To ensure we didn’t record calls while people were using Chrome or Firefox, we used Ivanti to block access to our internal billing app for Chrome and Firefox users,” explains Braid. “That enabled us to continue recording calls without violating PCI regulations.”

Expanding the Reach of Ivanti

Like many organizations, Auto Trader takes a performance hit to its hosted desktops whenever a user downloads or transfers video, still images, and other large files. “We’ve done an initial test with Ivanti Performance Manager and it does exactly what we need on that front,” says Braid.

He concludes, “We’ve completely changed our IT service and support model as part of the move to Manchester. Historically, we had a team of field engineers dealing with remote users and all the maintenance they required. Now we have a single team that manages two sites. And it can focus on product delivery and training instead of firefighting. The Ivanti suite of products has been a big part of that change.”



www.ivanti.com



1.800.982.2130



sales@ivanti.com

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