

SEPA Speeds Implementation, Secures Endpoints, and Increases User Productivity



Profile:

Responsible for the protection, regulation, and improvement of Scotland’s environment.

Location:

22 locations across Scotland

Industry:

Government/Research

Website:

<http://www.sepa.org.uk>

Solutions:

Ivanti® User Workspace Manager

Key Benefits:

- Improved efficiency to help meet aggressive production schedule
- Reduced time spent on upgrades, migration, system replacement, and helpdesk requests
- Reduced average logon times from minutes to seconds
- Easily configured VDI for multiple departments with distinct needs
- Ensured that desktop profiles followed end users seamlessly
- Secured endpoints against malware and ransomware more effectively

The task of environmental protection, regulation, and improvement of one of the world’s most beautiful countries, Scotland, falls to Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). SEPA’s 1,400 employees ensure that Scotland’s environment, human health, natural resources, and services are used as sustainably and effectively as possible. Applying a strong science and research base to its findings, SEPA assesses the quality of Scotland’s air, land, and water, encouraging businesses and industry to comply with their environmental responsibilities. SEPA delivers Scotland’s flood warning system, alongside other leading environmental initiatives for the Scottish Government and Health and Safety Executive.

The Challenge

Three years ago, SEPA relocated to a new data center in Motherwell. Faced with hardware reaching end of life and escalating IT management costs, the IS Team saw the move as an opportunity to virtualize its desktop and server infrastructure to extend hardware life and reduce management costs. Team members also realized that the move could allow them to address a substandard end-user experience caused by the aging infrastructure.

SEPA selected flexible thin client enablement from Citrix XenDesktop as its virtualization solution. The IS Team knew that Citrix would address many IS management concerns – but would it transform the user experience?

Angus McCabe, IS Support Analyst at SEPA, explains, “We redesigned the complete end-user computing infrastructure and wanted to ensure and future-proof our end users’ experience by offering fast logons, fully personalized desktops, and granular application management. We wanted every user to get a great experience no matter their device or location.”

In addition, the IS Team was facing tight timeframes. Due to relocation logistics, the team would have to take the entire Citrix, VMware, and Ivanti (formerly AppSense) infrastructure into production in only 20 days.

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Angus McCabe, IS Support Analyst, SEPA

The Solution: Ivanti User Workspace Manager

The IS Team selected Ivanti® User Workspace Manager (UWM) due to its end-user personalization and endpoint provisioning functionality, together with its excellent synergy with the Citrix XenDesktop platform. UWM was installed on two Windows 2008 R2 servers and was instrumental in the rapid rollout of a secure, fast, highly personalized desktop experience. After a few months of tweaking and stability testing, the ongoing phased rollout commenced across the remaining 22 SEPA locations.

Today, every SEPA employee uses a personalized desktop managed by Ivanti. Ninety percent utilize thin clients and the remainder use physical machines. The IS Team manages a single desktop image and leverages Ivanti to provide users with the non-standard applications appropriate for their role in the organization.

“User Workspace Manager is intuitive, allowing you to flexibly manipulate and customize an end-user environment to your specific needs. And the best endorsement of all – the user doesn’t even know it’s running.”

Angus McCabe, IS Support Analyst, SEPA

The Results

Beyond the 20-day rollout, UWM delivers value in many ways. The IS Team has saved significant man hours each year that was once spent on manual system upgrades and replacements, image provisioning, and helpdesk assistance.

Says McCabe, “Upgrades used to be highly intensive. Now, Ivanti does most of the work. For a recent upgrade of Internet Explorer, we just deleted the old version’s image from the Management Console, reset our Internet settings, and updated the standard user profile to the new version. That afternoon, all 1,400 users were utilizing the latest version of Explorer.”

For licensed applications, UWM allows the IS Team to isolate staff profiles, target settings, and perform an application upgrade en masse. Before centralization, the upgrade process would have taken weeks. UWM has

increased SEPA’s visibility, helping reporting on licensing usage to vendors.

UWM has also eased the complexity of logon scripting for group policies. Scripting at this level was once an acquired skill set and limited to a few system analysts within the SEPA IS team. Using UWM, changes to scripting that spanned thousands of lines are replaced by making straightforward, wizard-driven, point and click changes.

States McCabe, “Enabling the entire IS Team through an easy-to-use GUI means that we can react far quicker to user issues as we are no longer isolating or changing complex scripts. And, if an error occurs, we can just deploy User Workspace Manager’s rollback profiles to revert back in time to when the application was last working.”

Easing logon scripting complexity has saved time for end users, too. Before UWM, logon times could last from 10 to 15 minutes. Roaming users that performed frequent logons could spend up to hour a day cumulatively waiting to log on. Today, SEPA’s logons are counted in seconds, not minutes.

“We have acted as reference sites to other Scottish government organizations and councils.” McCabe details. “They simply can’t believe these logon times. It takes you back to how cumbersome and unproductive logging into work used to be – and for roaming users, this occurred several times each day.”

User Workspace Manager has provided SEPA users with other gains, too. SEPA’s flexible bad-weather policy created to cope with the unpredictable Scottish weather allows employees to work from home in inclement conditions. With UWM, users’ desktop and personalization roams seamlessly with them, improving productivity from any location. The thin client model also enables SEPA to optimize IS resources dramatically. For example, in all offices, IS can support 10 staff members with resources that, pre-UWM and VDI, would have supported seven staff.

McCabe notes that the team also leverages UWM to secure endpoints, cross-checking grey lists automatically to identify IS-approved and trusted applications. Using Trusted Ownership™, UWM validates unknown applications. For applications or files that cannot be validated, UWM prevents execution.

McCabe states, “Behind User Workspace Manager sits some of the smartest, most granular tools that we have seen in a long time, overcoming complexity at the backend to achieve simplicity and reliability at the front end.”

Concludes McCabe, “It’s intuitive, allowing you to flexibly manipulate and customize an end-user environment to your specific needs. And the best endorsement of all – the user doesn’t even know it’s running.”

Note: The results SEPA noted are specific to its total customer environment/experience of which Ivanti is a contributing product. Individual results may vary based on each customer’s unique environment.



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