



CHOICE HOTELS
AUSTRALASIA



CUSTOMER STORY

Choice Hotels

Choice Hotels goes virtual, finds “huge” cost and convenience benefits by running IGEL thin clients.



thin clients

development

services

solutions

Many functions. One device.

Choice Hotels

When Choice Hotels Australasia made the decision to virtualise the company's workspace, Systems Administrator Boban Lukic found huge savings in energy, maintenance costs and work-hours by deploying IGEL thin clients.

Choice Hotels Australasia is part of Choice Hotels International, one of the largest accommodation franchisors in the world. Choice Hotels Australasia, representing the Econo Lodge™, Comfort™, Quality™, Clarion® and Ascend™ brands, has more than 280 hotels, inns, suites and resorts across Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore.

With about 50 employees at head office and another 25 at remote locations throughout the region, the company is almost one hundred per cent virtualised, with IGEL thin clients connected to Citrix servers.

"We use a kind of remote desktop through Citrix ICA, like Terminals back in the old days, only using ICA protocols," explained Boban.

THE CUSTOMER

- ▶ 280 hotels throughout Australia, New Zealand and Singapore
- ▶ 50 employees at head office, 25 at remote sites throughout the region
- ▶ Administering Econo Lodge™, Comfort™, Quality™, Clarion® and Ascend™ brands

As well as Citrix ICA, the company runs Microsoft RDP and in a few cases web browsers as well.

THE CHALLENGE

- ▶ Find a desktop solution for the company's virtual environment
- ▶ Reduce cost of hardware infrastructure
- ▶ Reduce maintenance
- ▶ Centralize desktop management and infrastructure
- ▶ Reduce running costs

The company decided to move to a virtual environment using IGEL thin clients to improve hardware costs, reduce maintenance and centralise the company's desktop management and infrastructure. The previous environment ran on older desktop PCs, which the team at Choice Hotels found hard and expensive to maintain. The team responsible for keeping the computers running found themselves under increasing pressure, and working overtime on a regular basis.

The process began with Boban and his team implementing the necessary server structure to create a virtual workspace environment for Choice Hotels, a process that took two months to complete. During the server deployment the IT team began to trial and evaluate all brands of thin clients that were available in Australia at the time, and quickly decided that IGEL Technology offered the best package for Choice Hotel's needs.

"We considered and tested all current vendors in the market, but they were all blown away with a passion by what IGEL had to offer," said Boban. IGEL's technology impressed the IT team at Choice Hotels by offering support for almost all known protocols, as well as the agility the solution provides with OS updates that bring all the latest features to existing devices without upgrading hardware.



The team at Choice Hotels was also impressed with the level of help and support offered by IGEL's Australian team and partners.

"They played a great role in explaining the unlimited possibilities of IGEL thin clients and in connecting me to more technical staff who were even better at resolving all the unusual demands that we placed in front of them," said Boban.

Once the servers were in place, it took less than a week for Choice Hotels to roll out fifty IGEL UD3-730 LX models, which Boban describes as taking just a matter of minutes to set up.

The benefits began to manifest themselves immediately after the deployment, with administration time and costs dropping significantly.

THE SOLUTION

- ▶ IGEL UD3-730 LX
- ▶ IGEL's universal management suite
- ▶ Citrix XenApp
- ▶ Citrix XenDesktop

"After implementing thin clients in the way that we did, we ended up with only a few virtual servers maintaining every user on the network. Now if we need a patch or an update, it only has to be actioned in a few places rather than on every individual PC. Also, I hardly need to mention that thin clients require very little maintenance once they are set up. We have only had one thin client die in four years, and that took about five minutes to replace, rather than the four or five hours it takes to install a new desktop," he said. Following the deployment, power consumption at Choice Hotels has been the biggest single benefit for the company. Prior to deploying thin clients, the power bill ran to around AUD 10,000 per month. Now that figure has dropped to an "unbelievable" AUD 1800 per month, reports Boban.

THE BENEFITS

- ▶ Increased desktop space
- ▶ Fast, easy set-up by IT department
- ▶ Decreased start-up time
- ▶ Decreased power consumption
- ▶ Reduced cost of hardware
- ▶ Simplified security

Information security has also proven to be an area that the IGEL thin clients have excelled. Since Choice Hotels deals with a large amount of credit card activity, Boban and his team restricted the access of peripheral devices to each thin client, to ensure that the information could not be tampered with. As a thin client environment centralises data at the servers, security can be maintained at the one level, with each individual device locked down by the central management software.

"Again, locking down each device was a breeze with IGEL," he explained. "Other tasks performed by our IT staff have simplified as well. We have almost entirely discarded the need for desktop support staff, and in cases where support is required it can be done remotely by shadowing the session, leaving our staff with a lot more time for more important tasks."

Boban reports that staff are much happier using the thin clients, and the IT team are more productive.

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