



Case Study.

CAE provides secure remote access for Oxford University staff.

As part of Oxford University Administration Services, BSP (Business Services and Projects) delivers vital information services for both staff and students.

With an aim to strengthen and support the University's ongoing strategy and objectives, BSP was looking to improve service delivery to staff. To meet these objectives, CAE implemented a secure Citrix solution which provided hundreds of University staff with remote access.

Key Facts

- Oxford is the oldest University in the English-speaking world. Students come to Oxford from 140 countries and territories.
- Oxford is repeatedly ranked in the top ten of Universities worldwide in the annual tables compiled by Shanghai Jiaotong University.
- Business Services and Projects (BSP) is part of University Administration and Services (UAS). BSP partners with the departments of UAS, and through them, with the rest of the collegiate University, to deliver key information services for staff and students.
- BSP's mission is to develop and support business systems which underpin the effective operation of the UAS departments and the wider University so that these departments match the University's world-class standing.

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Oxford University

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The Challenge

University of Oxford had identified a need for remote access to IT resources as part of its strategic planning. The University wanted to ensure greater business continuity in case of major disruptions, such as weather conditions or health pandemics, providing remote staff with the same level of access when away from the office as they got while sitting at their desks. As part of implementing this capability the University decided that traditional passwords were not secure enough and decided that two-factor authentication should be implemented as standard.

CAE worked with the University's Business Services and Projects (BSP), which is a part of University Administration and Services (UAS), to deliver an appropriate solution.

The Solution

As CAE's overall solution, CAE were to deliver technical support, advice on pre-sales and implementation.

Based on the business case that BSP had developed, CAE helped to ensure the smooth delivery of services. With CAE's expertise in desktop virtualisation projects and extensive knowledge of the education sector, CAE were able to offer a unique tailored solution around which would address the University's key challenges. It was decided to implement Citrix XenDesktop 5.

Scope and design: Based upon the Business Case that had been developed by BSP, CAE worked closely with BSP's Project Manager to ensure that the solution provided desired functionality, appropriate access to the appropriate applications, and effective support for BSP staff whilst off site.

Key Objectives

- Ease of use.
- 24/7 availability.
- High performance.
- A solution that maintains your session if the internet connection drops briefly.
- Integration between applications that matches current desktop integration.
- Access to file systems at the same security level as logging on at work.

Services Delivered

- Design and scope.
- Installation and Configuration of Citrix XenApp farm, Access Gateway Appliances, Active Directory Domain and Identity Manager.
- Configuration of Published Desktop and ZenWorks integration for dynamic application delivery into remote session.
- Fully documented installation.

Demonstration and Trial: CAE initially delivered a remote access pilot so that UAS could test the proposed solution and ensure that it was fit for purpose. A new active directory domain together with e-directory identity manager for account synchronisation was deployed along side a Citrix XenApp farm and redundant pair of Citrix Access Gateways.

The test was managed and run by BSP. Up to 30 Virtual PC's were created and tested from four departments.

Key requirements of the test were:

- Assessment of ease of use.
- Assessment of responsiveness and performance.
- Test of different access points.
- Test of network security.
- Test of access to file systems and the use of the files.
- Testing of basic systems integration and interaction between applications (e.g. opening attachments in email).

A pilot was undertaken, which demonstrated that staff members with the appropriate credentials could access the key support applications securely from most computers that had an appropriate web browser and access to the internet.

Implementation: After the completion of a successful pilot and having revised the solution as required, BSP decided to expand the remote access system and move it into production, supporting a total of 480 remote users.

The technology was initially planned to be made available to a more limited number of users, but as the solution was implemented the demand for the service quickly increased as users could see the benefits of accessing remotely to critical business information.

It Works.

The authentication solution that CAE helped to provide secures the digital identities of authorised personnel while ensuring that only authenticated users can access private and sensitive data. The solution has allowed staff to adopt more flexible working, and as a result over 400 senior administrative staff members now have fully-secured remote access to the University's network.

Ben Heath, Head of Financial Reporting at the University of Oxford, says of the solution: "it allows staff to securely access the system if they have to stay at home for any reason, or need to carry out system testing out of hours. Remote working is now regarded as a core element of the IT architecture and so the solution's high level of security and reliability as well as its ease of use have been vital for our users and our IT support team."

Technology Deployed

- Virtualised Citrix XenApp 5.0 for Windows 2003 farm
- Citrix Access Gateway Enterprise Edition HA appliances
- Microsoft Active Directory
- Novell ZenWorks

Benefits

- Fully secured remote access for over 400 staff
- More flexible working
- Allows out of hours system testing
- A reliable, easy to use solution

CAE Technology Services

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