Deakin University Improves Desktop User Experience

Challenges

- Deliver a consistent desktop experience across a variety of student and staff scenarios
- Reduce logon times
- Eliminate reliance on roaming profiles
- Minimize the use of group policies

Partner

- Thomas Duryea Logicalis

Solution

- AppSense Insight
- AppSense Environment Manager

Results

- Uncovered known and unknown issues affecting performance
- Reduced logon times by 90%
- Eliminated profile corruption issues

About AppSense

AppSense is the leading provider of User Environment Management solutions for the secure endpoint. AppSense technology allows IT to secure and simplify workspace control at scale across physical, virtual and cloud-delivered desktops. AppSense solutions have been deployed by 3,600 enterprises worldwide to 9 million endpoints. AppSense is part of the LANDesk family with office around the world. For more information please visit www.appsense.com.

Overview

Established in 1974, Deakin University has five campuses—one in Melbourne, two in Geelong and one in Warrnambool. The fifth and fastest growing campus is in the cloud (online). Each campus has a distinctive character, rich culture, and strong presence in its local community.

Challenges

With staff numbering around 4,200, Deakin University serves a student population of approximately 53,000, which includes those on and off campus. Staff and students constantly access the University’s network from labs, administrative workstations, and off-campus locations.

As with many organisations that support large desktop environments—physical and virtual—profile corruption and excessive logon times plagued users, especially long-time Deakin staff.

AppSense Go+ Platinum partner Jim Zelener, Public Sector Engagement Manager, Thomas Duryea Logicalis, noted, “The help desk for Deakin’s desktop infrastructure support team logged over 600 calls annually for profile corruption. University staff were inconvenienced—often repeatedly—by not being able to log in due to profile corruption. On the IT side, a corrupt profile typically required an hour to resolve, costing the team 600 man-hours per year.”

Zelener continued, “To add insult to injury, fixing a corrupted profile did not guarantee that the profile would stay fixed.”

User and IT pain was not restricted to corrupt profiles. Logon times varied from 30 to 40 seconds for users with new machines to 90 seconds and beyond for older machines or users with large roaming profiles. In extreme cases, a logon might take 10 minutes or more. Many users in the extreme case category reacted by never logging off, which meant that necessary restarts to apply patches didn’t happen, creating security and usability concerns and heartburn for the IT Team.

“We could not deliver a consistent logon experience,” explains David Wyld, Manager of Desktop Support. “And we really had no visibility into what was happening as the user logged on to the Deakin platform, making it incredibly difficult to deliver a consistent logon experience for all users.”

Wyld also wanted to provide persistent desktop personalisation. “In our student environment, desktop configurations were lost every time a user logged off,” Wyld said. “They had to start from scratch every time.”

Wyld continued, “We realised that allowing students to personalise their desktop and making that personalisation persistent would be a great differentiator and selling point for Deakin.”

Solution: AppSense Insight and AppSense Environment Manager

Thomas Duryea Logicalis worked with Deakin University to locate the appropriate solution, and AppSense emerged as the most suitable choice.

“AppSense is a critical technology in improving user productivity, security and manageability for any enterprise workspace transformation project. We are finding AppSense simplifies larger deployments and addresses many of the workspace issues,” Damian Zammit, General Manager, Transformation Services, Thomas Duryea Logicalis.

“We needed a technology that could bridge the gap between our physical environment and our Citrix VDI deployment,” recalls Wyld. “Then, of
“We didn’t plan to purchase Insight and Environment Manager. But the great results from the POCs drove us to adjust our budget to make the funds available. And, after implementation, we have no regrets. We can’t wait to see what additional benefits AppSense technology can deliver for Deakin.”

Hi David,

I am seriously impressed with how AppSense has changed my behaviour. I can now shut down in the afternoon, knowing how long it will be before I can undock and pack up.

Thanks,

Jan.”

While the initial rollout was taking place in IT, Wyld prepared for subsequent implementations. The desktop infrastructure team started developing AppSense application templates for faculty machines and has deployed AppSense agents to 10,000 machines. AppSense provided Deakin with configurations for the numerous virtual applications that students access via Citrix in the university’s labs. Deakin has also enabled personalization for students, eliminating the need for them to start every new session from scratch.

Looking Ahead

Wyld and team are continuing work with Thomas Duryea Logicalis to roll out Environment Manager and are looking forward to reducing logon times for non-IT users as a result of the implementation. Additionally, Deakin is evaluating AppSense Application Manager to support an institutional security initiative. The team’s initial needs include malware protection, initially in student lab environments and privilege management for staff members.

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About Thomas Duryea Logicalis

Thomas Duryea Logicalis draws on 15+ years’ experience in ICT infrastructure to enable customers on their digital transformation journey. Our evolving IT services portfolio is designed to help transform your internal IT capabilities, letting you focus on your core business while we bring the scale and expertise to run your IT infrastructure more efficiently.