

Teachers Credit Union

Windows XP Migration Time and Costs Reduced by 33 Percent with Altiris



Teachers Credit Union, a credit union based in South Bend, Indiana, was looking to eliminate application conflicts, automate application deployments, and improve support. TCU turned to Altiris Client Management Suite and Software Virtualization Solution (SVS). Using SVS, it was able to run multiple versions of the same application, saving hundreds of hours in implementation time. It was also able to complete its migration to Windows XP under time and under budget, using Client Management Suite.

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Teachers Credit Union, headquartered in South Bend, Indiana, has 246,372 members and assets of \$1.7 billion. Opened in 1931, the credit union has 35 branch locations, 571 full-time employees and 68 part-time employees, or 407 members per employee compared to a national average of 462.

INDUSTRY

Banking

SOLUTION

Endpoint Management

Interview Participants:

Robert Boenne, Network Engineer

ALTIRIS: What IT challenges led you to implement Altiris Client Management Suite?

ROBERT: At the time, we had just put a long-term plan in place to upgrade our credit union's transaction processing system. The first step in that plan was migrating our desktops to Windows XP, which included replacing 400 computers and reimaging the remaining 350. We had over 20 images that were loaded up with applications and took a long time to install even using the semi-automated imaging tool we had at the time. Given the timeline to migrate and the size of our IT staff, there was no way we could complete even step one of the plan without the help of a very powerful client management tool.

ALTIRIS: Why did you choose Altiris?

ROBERT: I had always heard good things about Altiris, so they were at the top of my list when we started researching products. After looking at the leading client management systems on the market and doing a return on investment justification, we chose to standardize on Altiris. The seamless integration of all the Altiris products and the fact they are managed by a single console were big factors in our decision. Other vendors promise integration, but it's not true integration; they typically have many databases with separate consoles which can be a management nightmare.

ALTIRIS: How did your migration to Windows XP go?

ROBERT: Excellent. First, with Altiris we were able to create a single, hardware-independent image which installs automatically over the network. It's also very flexible and easy to modify unlike the old images that required us to make changes manually. That's a huge timesaver. The night before the migration, we used Altiris to capture the personalities on each PC, and the next day we swapped out the machines that were being replaced with new ones, and loaded the personalities back on the PCs. Back at the office, the new computers were imaged with Windows XP and the existing

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Robert Boenne

Network Engineer
Teachers Credit Union

ones were reimaged. Including travel time, two technicians were able to migrate three branch offices a day, which is about 30 machines total. Before it took several days to turnaround a single PC, now it only takes several hours.

ALTIRIS: How long would it have taken you to migrate to Windows XP using your previous deployment system?

ROBERT: Without Altiris it would have taken three times as long to migrate to Windows XP and cost three times as much. It would have taken two technicians all day to do a single branch. And we would have had to involve the users to help with the process and do things like create their profiles and reattach their personal folders and printers. If we needed to install a new piece of software or make changes to many applications, we would have to script them by hand. Altiris eliminated the manual work, and it added a layer of security for us. Now that we're using the Windows XP firewall, the machines can only be remotely accessed through the Altiris console. So even if we had an internal virus breakout, it would not be able to use these administrative shares to plant itself.

ALTIRIS: Did Altiris help in other ways?

ROBERT: Yes, Altiris' detailed, automated reports saved us a lot of time preparing for the Windows XP migration. The reports helped determine exactly how many new PCs we needed to purchase by telling us processor speeds, memory size and other information that let us know which ones could be upgraded to Windows XP and which could not. Without Altiris, we would have spent days visiting each machine and running tests to gather all that data. In addition, we are using Altiris to patch our DMZ servers and will eventually roll out patch management to the entire organization.

ALTIRIS: Are you using Altiris Client Management Suite to install new software?

ROBERT: Yes, any time we have to install software we push it out automatically over the network with Altiris and never have to touch the machine. With 35 branch locations in and around South Bend and Indianapolis, that saves a ton of travel time.

“SVS has made testing extremely easy, which is another big timesaver. Now when we want to tryout a new piece of software, we use SVS to put it on a layer of the OS, run it, and see if we like it. If we don't, we just turn the application off, delete it, and it's completely gone.”

Robert Boenne
Network Engineer
Teachers Credit Union

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

- Running conflicting versions of the same business application
- Automating the imaging and deployment process
- Reducing support time and costs

Business Results

- SVS allowed the credit union to run multiple versions of the transaction processing system for business and training purposes
- Thousands of technician hours saved annually
- Windows XP migration completed in one-third the time and at one-third the cost

Symantec Products

- Altiris® Client Management Suite™
- Altiris® Software Virtualization Solution™ Professional

Technology Environment

- Number of Users: 750 desktops; 50 laptops
- Number of Servers: 100
- Hardware: Gateway, Dell, IBM Thinkpads
- OS: Microsoft Windows XP for PCs; Microsoft Windows 2003 for servers

Why Symantec?

- ▶ CMS provided seamless integration
- ▶ Ability to manage entire environment from one console
- ▶ Ease of use

ALTIRIS: Have help desk calls been reduced since you implemented Altiris?

ROBERT: The call volume has gone down and the calls we are getting now are more application specific as opposed to general computer questions. As a result, we are able to do a lot more in a lot less time.

ALTIRIS: How are you using Altiris Software Virtualization Solution (SVS) Professional Edition?

ROBERT: Let me give a little background to the situation first. A credit union's major financial operations, from deposits and withdrawals to calculating interest on accounts, are handled by the transaction processing system. It's mission critical. Nothing happens without it. So when it finally came time to upgrade the system, we knew we would have a lengthy transitional period during which we would need four versions of the system up and running: the new version, the previous version, a training copy, and an additional copy so we could set up a mock system in order to test software and perform other tasks.

However, only one version of the system can be installed at a time per machine. Setting up four separate systems was simply impossible from a cost and time perspective. Altiris SVS saved the day because it allows us to run multiple versions on each PC by installing copies on different layers of the Windows operating system (OS) without altering the OS or interfering with other applications.

ALTIRIS: How easy is it to switch between versions of the transaction processing system using SVS?

ROBERT: As easy as clicking on an icon. That's it. If any of the 600 employees who use the system each day have to access the old version to get information, it takes seconds to make the switch.

ALTIRIS: Did SVS simplify training?

ROBERT: Yes. We had to train all 600 employees on the new system, and out of necessity the training required access to the old and new versions to compare differences and meet other training needs.

Again, thanks to SVS, we could simultaneously run the new and old versions of the transaction processing system on the PCs in our training rooms. Without it, we would need two PCs per training seat and it would take longer to train plus add some confusion to the process by having the employees move back and forth between machines. Also, SVS gave them access to the training version of the application from their work computer after they finished training. So if they needed to brush up on some skills a few days or a few weeks later, they could do it from any computer in the credit union. We would not have met our training deadlines without SVS.

ALTIRIS: Did SVS save you time implementing the new transaction processing system?

ROBERT: SVS saved us hundreds of hours. I pretty much did the upgrade for the PC client on our transaction processing software to the new version myself in one three-day weekend. Without SVS, I would have had to recruit several more IT people plus people from every branch who would have had to do many things manually with pre-printed instructions and phone support. I estimate we would have needed anywhere from 40 to 70 people. At least one person for each of our 35 branches and in many cases two. Upgrading the system was the equivalent of doing heart and lung surgery, and basically one person did it in three days. Best of all, it was transparent to the employees. On Friday we were running the old system and on Tuesday we were running the new one and the users hardly saw any downtime.

ALTIRIS: How else are you using SVS?

ROBERT: To test software. It's made testing extremely easy, which is another big time-saver. Now when we want to tryout a new piece of software, we use SVS to put it on a layer of the OS, run it, and see if we like it. If we don't, we just turn the application off, delete it, and it's completely gone.

SVS is also helping with remnants. Not every piece of software installs and uninstalls cleanly and so remnants are often left behind, which over time makes the machines unstable. We update the majority of our software four times a year which means

lots of remnants. By using SVS to load the software, we can turn the layer with the old version off, install the update in another layer and turn that one on. The old version is completely wiped clean from the system without remnants. It looks as if the new version has been installed brand new, which in essence it has been. SVS helps keep our PCs healthier for a longer period of time. Our goal is to run all of our major business applications with SVS.

ALTIRIS: Did you implement Altiris yourself?

ALTIRIS: Yes, but with initial help from Altiris Platinum Partner ITS Communications. ITS helped us set up the initial Altiris environment, then I basically took over from there. If I were to do this again, I would use ITS more because we would have been money ahead if they had come in and performed targeted tasks for us. They also conducted a series of training classes for us after the implementation, and we call on them whenever we have an issue we want solved quickly. ITS shortened the learning curve and saved us time by showing us how to do things correctly the first time. I would recommend them to anyone who needs the assistance of an Altiris expert.

ALTIRIS: Do you use any other Symantec products?

ROBERT: We are planning to implement Symantec™ Endpoint Protection for its anti-virus and other security features. We're looking forward to rolling it out with Client Management Suite. The integration between the two products will save us a lot of time.

ALTIRIS: Would you recommend Altiris to others?

ROBERT: Yes, I get phone calls from other credit unions asking how I can run multiple copies of software at the same time and I tell them about Altiris. It's a good product that pays for itself by limiting the number of people that you need to do the same task. It's well worth the value, and we plan to add more Altiris products in the future. With Altiris, we have far more flexibility and powerful solutions to make life easier in the IT department than we ever did before.