

ATLANTIS IMPROVES THE PERFORMANCE OF VIRTUAL DESKTOPS FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND STAFF



ankabut
عنكبوت

By implementing software-defined storage from Atlantis Computing, Ankabut reduced its storage costs by 40-50% and provided a fast 9 second login time.

Ankabut plays a vital role in supporting higher education and research throughout the United Arab Emirates (UAE). As the country's Advanced National Research and Education Network, the organisation provides and maintains a 10 GBPS connectivity backbone and 1 GBPS link to 27 different universities. This vast infrastructure enables Ankabut to connect with other educational institutions and online research facilities around the world. The organisation also offers a range of IT services and provides professional support and guidance for universities that are undertaking major IT projects.

In 2014, a university specialising in vocational studies approached Ankabut and requested help to replace 1600 desktops and laptops. Ankabut responded by proposing a centrally hosted and managed virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), to relieve the university of the ongoing burden of desktop management. While it had no prior experience of VDI, Ankabut recognised that there was a huge business opportunity for it to deliver managed VDI services for many more universities in the future.

ANTICIPATED STORAGE COSTS REDUCED BY 40-50%

When Ankabut initially worked with Citrix to design the VDI environment, it planned to use a traditional three-tiered storage platform, based entirely on IBM hardware. However, a local IT partner suggested that Ankabut consider incorporating a software-based storage solution from Atlantis, so a proof-of-concept trial was launched to compare the two different approaches with 100 virtual desktops. "It became clear that the Atlantis solution was very good value for money," says Mohammad Mabrouk, infrastructure manager at Ankabut. "By using Atlantis for our VDI, we reduced our anticipated storage costs by 40-50%."

CHALLENGES

- Deliver VDI-as-a-service, cost effectively, for a leading university
- Ensure a consistently good desktop user experience over the public Internet

SOLUTION

- Atlantis USX, Software-defined storage solution

BENEFITS

- 40-50% less expensive than traditional storage infrastructure
- Extremely fast desktop performance – 9 second login
- Increased storage capacity by 80%
- Solution scalable for 10,000+ users

DESKTOP PERFORMANCE IMPROVED

During the proof-of-concept period, Ankabut compared the desktop performance of different storage infrastructures and was amazed by the results. "Atlantis made a very big difference," recalls Mabrouk. "When we added Atlantis to the trial VDI, we found that we could offer a fast 9 second login time for users."

The VDI infrastructure is now up and running and being used successfully by Ankabut to deliver desktop services, over a public WAN, to 2,500 users at the university, including students, members of the teaching faculty and support staff. "It is helping us to deliver the quality desktop service that we have promised and that the university expects," Mabrouk says.

STORAGE CAPACITY OPTIMISED BY 80%

The use of Atlantis software reduces the amount of storage hardware that Ankabut needs to maintain in its infrastructure. Atlantis also improves the value that the organisation gains from its investment in storage, by enabling it to support larger numbers of users for less cost.

Pradeep Thampi is a hardware integration engineer at Ankabut and he was responsible for introducing the VDI. "We can use our storage in a very effective way using Atlantis," he says. "In our non-persistent environment, Atlantis enables us to optimise our storage capacity by 80%."

SCALABLE SOLUTION FOR 10,000+ USERS

Ankabut now intends to grow its VDI environment and offer VDI services to more of the universities in its network. "As early as next year, we hope to start delivering VDI services to 10,000 users, or perhaps more," Mabrouk says, providing a clear indication of the scale of the company's expansion goals.

As it continues to develop its VDI and roll out its new remote desktop services to up to 26 other universities across the UAE, Ankabut is confident that it has made the right technology choices. Thampi pronounces, "Atlantis is an inevitable part of our growth plan."

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*Mohammad Mabrouk,
infrastructure Manager, Ankabut*

VIRTUALISED IT ENVIRONMENT

- Citrix XenDesktop 7.6
- Citrix XenServer 6.2 & 6.5
- IBM Storwize V7000 Unified
- IBM Blade servers x240 model with dual sockets
- Atlantis USX - Diskless storage solution

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