Michel Gruppe AG

ATLANTIS DELIVERS HIGH PERFORMANCE VDI SOLUTION TO SWISS HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

One of Switzerland's most advanced healthcare providers has deployed a software-defined storage solution from Atlantis to accelerate a failing VDI deployment. Now the staff can **focus on patient care** rather than waiting for desktop boot and login.

Swiss healthcare provider Michel Gruppe AG manages a private clinic, a mental healthcare facility as well as three other medical institutions in the Berner Overland region. With more than 700 doctors, nurses and staff, Michel Gruppe provides medical services to patients in five separate locations across the region. The company's IT services are responsible for ensuring staff can work efficiently at more than 350 workstations in order to provide the best possible care to patients.

When looking to improve Michel Gruppe's IT infrastructure back in 2013, the healthcare provider looked towards a fully virtualised desktop infrastructure (VDI). The company's existing SAN storage was unable to meet the VDI system's requirements, managing to only run 150 workstations before performance started to quickly fall. Michel Gruppe needed a solution to save its initial investment in the VDI solution and provide services for all 350 workstations planned in the original strategy.

HUGE TIME SAVINGS AT COMPETITIVE PRICING

When the VDI solution was first deployed, Michel Gruppe opted to remain with their current IT partner and deployed the system based on a traditional HP SAN.

"In hindsight, this decision was a mistake that we made," says head of IT Markus Durrer. The system's performance seemed to be sufficient to support up to 150 workstations, but after that, it appeared to hit a wall. The IT team tried to increase the amount of clients to more than 300 users, but performance issues started to show very early on and made the system pretty much unusable.

CHALLENGES
- Reduce login times to enable staff to work more efficiently
- Resolve the shortage of storage capacity
- Minimise the time spent in the IT department managing storage
- Realise the cost savings of the initial VDI strategy

SOLUTION
- VMware Horizon View
- HP MSA 2040 All-Flash Storage Array
- Atlantis USX
- 350 Zero Clients

"We could not believe our eyes. Atlantis was installed in only 15 minutes and all our performance problems were instantly solved. Log-on times were noticeably faster and the issues related with the VDI's speed were resolved for good."

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"It was very difficult as the storage was just not able to support more than 150 workstations. Anything more than that resulted in endless log-on times and frustration when trying to perform the simplest tasks. For example, opening an Excel spreadsheet could take up to ten minutes and printing a single page up to five," Durrer explains.

The only solution that the IT partner could offer was to maximise storage speed by adding more spindles and cache, but this ignored the fundamental weakness in the old-fashioned hardware-only approach to storage.

"We had maxed out the storage's performance at 150 workstations. That infrastructure was supposed to support more than 300." Durrer says. Therefore, Michel Gruppe decided to seek out a new solution to handle its performance issues.

"I had read about Atlantis Computing before and we consulted another integrator, activeIT Solutions in Rubigen, to see if the Atlantis solution could help us. Our HP contract was ending so we were looking for a completely new storage solution." ActiveIT and Atlantis were able to offer a solution based on Atlantis USX software-defined storage by Atlantis with a HP all-flash storage array to replace the old HDD solution.

The solution was quickly deployed, taking over from the old system within minutes. Durrer said: "We could not believe our eyes. Atlantis was installed in only 15 minutes and our performance problems were instantly solved. Log-on times were noticeably faster and the issues with the VDI's speed were resolved for good."

LOG IN TIMES REDUCED TO JUST 30 SECONDS
A major benefit of the Atlantis software is its ability to integrate and operate in RAM, ensuring high-speed performance for the virtual desktops. Our first stab at VDI showed that even the best hardware cannot solve the performance challenges of VDI - more intelligent solutions are needed. Atlantis' hyper-deduplication and compression functionalities, together with RAM-acceleration, gave us the performance that traditional hardware couldn't."

Previously, it used to take employees 10-15 minutes to boot up their computers and log in. Using Atlantis software as part of the VDI has helped to reduce this process to about 30 seconds. The time savings for each employee equals roughly 950 work days a year for Michel Gruppe, providing an enormous efficiency boost for the entire organisation whilst saving approximately CHF 443.666 ($447,000).

BENEFITS
- Fast, scalable storage delivering higher performance and lower costs
- Single storage platform supports virtual desktops, remote access and BYOD
- Up to 92.5% reduction in desktop login times, saving 1.7 days of working time per employee p.a., creating estimated savings of CHF 443.000 p.a. (c.$447,000)
- Higher flexibility to react faster to users' needs

"We think that a VDI installation of our size cannot work on traditional storage. Our first stab at VDI showed that even the best and up to date hardware cannot solve the performance issues - more intelligent solutions are needed. Atlantis' hyper-deduplication and compression functionalities, together with RAM-acceleration, give us the performance an old hardware-based design could not."

Markus Durrer, IT Manager
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The solution has also given Michel Gruppe the opportunity to offer virtualised desktops to a partner company based in the same city. "We now deliver 30 workstations to one of our partners with offices just around the corner, which gives us some unexpected but welcome monetary return on our VDI investment," explains Durrer. "With the 30 external workstations, the storage underpins 380 clients without any sign of slowing down. We think that we can get up to 450 out of the existing setup. We plan to expand our footprint even further and thanks to Atlantis, we have no fear of future performance issues."

BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY WITH SIMPLIFIED MANAGEMENT

The deployment of a software-defined storage solution from Atlantis has also made a considerable difference to the productivity of the IT team. "In the past, we spent a lot of time just fire-fighting and maintaining old desktops," recalls Durrer. "Atlantis enables us to administer our desktop storage through a simple management console. I estimate that the IT team saves one day a week in time now that they no longer have to worry about our storage."

PARTNER: ACTIVEIT SOLUTIONS

"A lot of our customers that have deployed VDI environments with a traditional storage approach struggle with performance issues. Throwing more and expensive hardware at the problem is never the solution – new intelligent software-defined solutions is," says Reto Luginbühl activeIT Solutions. "With our long-standing experience and know-how, we were able to demonstrate the benefits of Atlantis USX within one day and solve Michel Gruppe's performance problems instantly. The solution could even save most of the investment that had been made in the old-fashioned system just by adding a layer of advanced software with hyper-deduplication, compression and DRAM acceleration."

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