

VMware Horizon View Upgrade at Housing Association

Industry

Public Service

Location

Austria

Key Challenges

- Short timeframe (Windows end-of-life)
- Firmware of Zero Clients

Solution

A test environment ensured the configuration of UAGs and Connections Servers as well as the compatibility of the zero client with the Golden Master VM.

Business Benefits

- Higher security
- Supported Operating System

VMware Footprint

- Horizon View und UAGs

This housing association has a rich history of supporting the community since the early nineteen-hundreds. The organization prides itself to maintain their more than 20,000 housing units strong portfolio by modernizing more than a thousand units per year. It was about time that they tackled their IT infrastructure as well. More than 200 of their employees relied on accessing their virtual desktops through zero clients.

The housing association was using a somewhat older version of Horizon View, which needed to be updated to support Windows 10.

“With all of these modernizing projects going on, we cannot afford any downtime for the employees” said the CTO of the association “That’s why I figured we should ask someone from the outside to guide us through the process. Someone that is very knowledgeable and does these kinds of upgrades often”.



The Challenge

Reinhard Partmann, comdivision’s project lead on the case, knew that “the firewall configuration also had to be adapted to the new Unified Access Gateways (UAG). The jump from the old version to the then current version was relatively large. Mainly because only a certain highest version of the firmware was available for the zero clients”.

The Solution

Partmann suggested to set up a small proof of concept (PoC) environment with only one Connection Server and one UAG before the update. “We updated two zero clients and created a new test pool with the appropriate Horizon agents using existing master images in the PoC environment” Partmann explained.

“The successful tests – internal and external access – prompted us to create a migration plan in which all components are brought up to date. First, all 250 Zeroclients were updated to the latest firmware. Before we updated the connection server, all connection servers that were no longer required were removed from the configuration.

After the old version was cleaned of contaminated sites, we were able to start upgrading the Horizon environment” he continued.

Since linked clones were mostly used, the Composer component also had to be brought up to date. Then new Horizon Connection servers were installed on a current operating system and integrated into the environment. The old Horizon Connection Servers running under Windows 2008 R2 were removed and switched off cleanly.

“So they were very well prepared for the end of support for Windows 2008 and Windows 2008 R2” Partmann said.

Subsequently, the security servers in the DMZ were replaced by UAGs. The appropriate firewall configuration could easily be transferred from the PoC environment. The master images of the existing pools were equipped with the new agent and the pools recomposed. This was followed by another access test. Internally directly to the View environment and externally via the UAGs – which have now replaced the security servers.

“These tests were also successful” said Partmann and the CTO confirmed: “The users didn't notice anything about the upgrade! Our admins are super happy with the quick implementation and also that they now have a PoC, or test environment for upcoming upgrades to play with”.

“The users didn't notice anything about the upgrade”

Customer's CTO

Furthermore, the security of the systems has also been improved since the UAG platform is used for external access and internally because the Horizon services are operated on current operating system platforms.

“When we first started, an often-issued statement from the IT department was *...if everything goes well!*” laughed Partmann “if you prepare for all eventualities, test them accordingly and know the customer's environment, then it will go well, without a doubt” Partmann concluded.