YMCA of San Francisco

San Francisco, California

As a part of one of the largest not-for-profit community service organizations in the United States, the YMCA of San Francisco is a member-supported organization with an annual budget of $35 million. It serves over 115,000 individuals and families in five San Francisco Bay Area counties.

The Challenge

Like many large organizations, the YMCA of San Francisco wanted to set up a computer system that would allow multiple remote sites to store shared information at a central location, and still have local access. Unfortunately, the organization was experiencing serious inefficiencies due to outdated network and computing equipment.

Embracing New Technology to Provide Even Stronger Community Services

Its theme is "We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities." And although the YMCA is known for its health and fitness facilities, the organization also offers many programs that serve the critical needs in the community—including programs for disadvantaged families, job skill training, and senior centers. In total, the organization invested about $10.8 million in community programs in 1997.

To keep pace with the requirements of the organization, the YMCA of San Francisco needed to update its entire computing network and replace circa 1980 green-screen terminals. These steps would align the organization with the current YMCA image campaign—better service for communities through the power of information technology.

Wyse Winterm Thin Clients. A Better Solution

In choosing a network and computer platform, the YMCA of San Francisco wanted a system that could leverage future technology, including Windows® based applications. By design, Wyse® Winterm™ thin clients are ready to take full advantage of and seamlessly integrate with powerful enterprise servers and applications.

The organization also wanted a system that would be easy to manage, and could leverage its existing investment in a UNIX-based host. Security was an issue because these terminals would be used as front desk devices. The good news: A Winterm solution could satisfy all of these requirements.

WYSE

Smarter. Easier. Thinner.
Innovative Thin Clients from Wyse.

Winterm Thin-Client Benefits

Winterm thin clients were the perfect choice to deliver the objectives of the organization. They are well suited as point-of-sale terminals—with the advantages of centralized, easy administration and a low price tag. And, they would allow YMCA of San Francisco to preserve its investment in UNIX-based hardware.

The Solution

More than 100 Winterm 2500T terminals have been deployed throughout the organization for all point-of-sale activities, customer service support, financial development, and accounting. Servers running Citrix®/WinFrame® software are connected to the terminals and to a UNIX-based host, allowing desktop access to UNIX applications.

Results

Using the Winterm devices, the YMCA of San Francisco has kept down its implementation costs and retained its investment in UNIX hardware. Its system is well positioned to move from terminal emulation to a Windows-based GUI environment.

Architecture

- Winterm 2500T thin clients
- Citrix/WinFrame server software
- Single 133 MHz processor
- 64MB memory
- 2GB hard disk

Security Concerns Resolved

With the Winterm centralized approach, security is enhanced because administrators can deploy, manage, and support applications and user configurations from one location.

"For our environment, the security aspect is absolutely essential. The Winterm desktops are located in highly visible front desk locations. But because they are very secure units, we don't have to worry about theft or viral infections," said Jeff Bundy, chief information officer for the YMCA of San Francisco. Because users can't load software from their desktops, the chance of a virus being introduced is dramatically reduced.

A Successful Installation

For the YMCA of San Francisco, the first step was installing 13-site frame relay network.

At that point, Eakins Open Systems, a Wyse Value Added Reseller, helped set up the servers, software, and thin clients. The new infrastructure could handle point-of-sale activities, customer support, financial development, and accounting.

"As point-of-sale smart terminals, they are perfect," asserted Bundy. "The ease of administration is clearly a selling point. The low price doesn't hurt either, but the management function is the most important. It's unbelievable!"

The central administration office can now run standard, off-the-shelf Windows-based software for financial activities. At the branches, the desktops are used for membership card scanning.

Results

Using the Winterm desktops, the YMCA of San Francisco has been able to retain its investment in UNIX hardware and is positioned to move from terminal emulation to a Windows-based GUI environment.

"We are extremely satisfied with them [Winterm terminals]," stated Bundy. "Not only is performance excellent, but we can run multiple sessions now. They're fast, they're clean, and they do the job."

Widened Deployment in the Future

As other branches are opened or expanded, the YMCA of San Francisco intends to add Winterm products. The organization is also considering adding Wyse Winterm wireless technology into its computing environment.

"We're thinking of deploying Winterm 2930 wireless units at major branches that offer child care. As parents drive up to drop off kids, our staff can check them in and out. The portable wireless Winterm terminal would allow us to bring up live information and record changes instantly," concluded Bundy.

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