



Ingeus Group of Companies. Leading International Employment Agency Migrates to Wyse Thin Client Technology

“Using Wyse is the only practical way for our rapidly growing company to manage computing in our offices.”

Customer:

- Ingeus Group
- 994 staff in Australia
- 48 office locations in Australia

Challenge:

- Provide a powerful computing environment for offices with low support costs
- Provide a consistent Standard Operating Environment
- Keep support staff levels at a minimum

Solution:

- Centralised thin computing environment with Wyse S10, S30 and S50 desktop thin computers connected to centralised IBM blade servers via Citrix Presentation Server
- Centralised infrastructure management with Wyse Device Manager

Results:

- Fast new office set up
- Faster response to clients needs
- Increased security and Standard Operating Environment
- Greatly reduced support costs. No technicians needed in the field
- Cost of support about one quarter that of PC's

The Challenge: Providing secure, reliable and fast data input capability at a moments notice

Helping people to participate more fully in the workforce is the philosophy that drives and binds the Ingeus group of companies together worldwide. From the welfare-to-work services of WorkDirections and Your Employment Solutions in Australia, WorkDirections UK, Ingeus in France and Germany, to Clements recruitment in Australia, in 2007 Ingeus aims to help transform the lives of more than 87,000 people worldwide.

With a focus on helping those people deemed the “hardest to help”- job seekers with multiple and complex barriers to employment, the company was founded in 1989 by Managing Director Thérèse Rein.

“Ingeus is a company that measures, drives and celebrates our success on our ability to assist people from dependence to independence; from unemployment to employment. Our success stems from the success of those we help,” Thérèse Rein said.

When head of IT & T services for the Ingeus Group, Luiz de Almeida looked at the forward plans for the company some five years ago, particularly in Australia, it was clear that keeping up with growth plans meant a change from PCs in order to run the regional offices and better interface with clients.

“In 1989 we had one office and just two staff members. Today we have just under 1000 staff across almost 50 offices in Australia, plus nearly 500 staff and 20 offices overseas. We clearly anticipated that using PCs would not give us the Standard Operating Environment we needed to keep support costs to a minimum, provide a secure and rapid environment for users, and to maximise security.

We also realised that, in line with continued growth, we would need to set up new offices quickly, and the best way to do this was to adopt server based computing and thin client technology.”

Jim: An Ingeus Client.

Out of the dark and into the light

You know that a man is disenfranchised when he retreats from society to live in a cave. Jim, once a seasonal worker, was in his 40's when he came to work for Ingeus two years ago.

A violent and brutal childhood had caught up with Jim and although he'd tried to settle down in conventional accommodation it was not the right place for him. So he turned his back on society, took a few belongings and withdrew to live in a cave.

Here in the foothills of the Blue Mountains, with Park Rangers discreetly turning a blind eye, he survived on a bare minimum.

Remarkably, he kept his appointments with Ingeus, making the considerable trek on foot.

Slowly, with great kindness, his dedicated advisor, Jeannine assisted him in facing his past. He had been living in the cave for some 12 months and disturbingly, arrived for one appointment quite ill with flu. Immediately Jeannine arranged an appointment with a doctor, and in the interests of his health pleaded with him to move indoors. He moved into temporary accommodation.

To keep in touch with him, Jeannine would leave notes for Jim at the local soup kitchen.

Further counselling and accommodation assistance from Jeannine saw Jim eventually able to transfer to a less-intensive level of assistance.

And then, Jim got a job at the local warehouse. He still remains at that job and has since found a place to call his own.

The Solution: Thin Computing

Ingeus started working closely with the Australian Commonwealth Employment Service in 1991 to provide case management services for the very long term unemployed. This required the company to run purpose built applications for reporting purposes. These were built on Citrix servers running RDP protocol and were ideal for server-based computing. Other applications included standard Microsoft and other commercial packages that could easily run on Citrix.

All applications were loaded onto the central IBM blade servers in the IT data centre in Brisbane and fed out to the Wyse thin clients in the regional offices.

By 2003 Ingeus was using 250 of the Wyse Winterm 9235LE running embedded Windows XP.

"The Wyse thin clients worked a treat but we did experience issues with the operating system. We went back to Wyse and changed our configurations to a wider range of thin client alternatives that Wyse could deliver and that better suited our needs," Luiz said.

Ingeus initially started with PCs in the regional offices but quickly realised that the support and operating costs would be too high.

"Having disk based PCs in our offices was not acceptable from a security perspective. Also, we needed to keep all PCs in sync across our offices to ensure a standard operating environment. This is impossible without a large support staff team," he said.

Wyse: The widest range and easiest to use and manage

The wide range of thin clients available from Wyse was of great benefit to Ingeus. They now have over 800 Wyse thin client devices operating around Australia:

- Wyse S30s are used as the customer interface devices in "café" style workspaces in each regional centre. These are Windows CE based units that allow users a standard Windows experience and are quick and user friendly. They are mounted behind flat panel screens in the café (see photo) and do not feature any moving parts such as fans, and emit no heat or noise. The slim operating system, Flash memory and RAM, also makes for fast performance and boot up. "We wanted to avoid a situation where clients had long waits for computer responses."

- The staff in the regional offices use a mixture of S10 terminals for routine applications using Wyse Thin OS or S50s running Linux for power applications. Ingeus has experienced very fast set up with the Wyse OS on the S10 in particular. "With less than 1.5MB of OS to download, the S10 is up and running in around 6 seconds, way faster than any PC."

Device management and set up is also a very important and quick experience using Wyse thin clients compared to PCs. Ingeus can deploy to new sites, load new software or update quickly from the server, and users can log in from any device on the network by using a password. Using Wyse Device Manager, Luiz can monitor all units on the network by activity, serial number and location.

The Technology

Ingeus uses Citrix Version 4 with a combination of Wyse S10, S30 and S50 thin clients. All are connected to the Brisbane based IBM Blade Server racks. Each server hosts between 50 and 80 users per server depending upon the application load.

Benefits

Ingeus reports several benefits from thin client computing, one of which is the speed by which a new office can be set up.

“Our purchasers can ask us to set up a new office to service the unemployed people in towns anywhere across Australia. Sometimes the lead time for IT setup at a new site can be only a number of days.”

“With the Wyse devices we just have to feed in the network, attach Wyse and the office is open for business” Luiz said.

“The business benefit is therefore about responding quickly to meet purchaser and client needs, so that we can be there for them as quickly as possible.”

“Other benefits include reduced running costs and increased security,” he said.



Ingeus runs 800 plus thin clients with no direct field support. Users can attach their thin client to the network, with all applications running from the central server. Support work is carried out from the head office, making sure that the data centre is highly available, secure and backed up.

A Standard Operating Environment

Ingeus has found that a consistent operating environment is a real benefit in using Wyse thin clients. While the cost of PCs is about the same as thin clients up front, it is the support costs where Ingeus really start to show a saving.

“Each user tends to modify the PC for themselves which destroys our ability to centrally manage all devices. Different updates, applications and drivers, plus downloads stored from the web including adware, malware and viruses, soon changes the profile of each system. Once the SOE is out of sync, support costs begin to increase. Right now we have no field support for thin clients as it’s just not required,” Luiz said.

Technology is a service

Ingeus' focus is to make sure its technology helps to provide a better service to its clients; many of whom have been unemployed for long periods of time, or may be lacking in confidence or have little to no computer experience.

"We believe that work really matters to people. We believe that our technology must mirror our human approach when working with clients; it must be a solution that helps them move quickly and easily towards the workforce, it must help to empower them. Thin clients from Wyse do this for us."





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Wyse Technology Inc.
Level 11, 100 Miller St
North Sydney NSW 2060
www.wyse.com.au

Wyse Sales:
1300 88 WYSE

Or send email to:
info@wyse.com.au

International Sales:
United States 1 800 GET WYSE
China 86 10 84973054/55
France 33 1 39 44 00 44
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