

EDF Energy Personalizes Its User Environment with Ivanti



EDF Energy (formerly British Energy) is the UK’s largest producer of low-carbon electricity, the biggest supplier of electricity by volume in Great Britain, and the largest supplier to British businesses.

Background Challenges

EDF Energy Group’s large operations and international reputation require certain groups of employees to work remotely, managing overseas projects or travelling around the country to business meetings. However, restricted by extensive legislation from the Office of Civil and Nuclear Security (OCNS), EDF Energy was unable to provide remote access to business applications such as Microsoft Office or Oracle systems.

Stuart Wilshaw, Wintel Application Team Member, comments, “The OCNS legislation is designed to protect essential energy providers from security breaches and acts of terrorism and as such it is incredibly tight. We have to keep our systems locked down much more than most organizations.”

The inability to access applications remotely impacted EDF Energy’s productivity and market-response times. And, with a new CEO on board, the IT department was tasked with finding a way to provide remote access while complying with the essential security legislation.

Wilshaw explains, “From an initial VPN pilot, which quickly proved to be too clunky for use, we turned to Citrix. It delivered the remote access we needed and sailed through OCNS accreditation.”

However, the Citrix environment brought its own challenges. EDF Energy had trouble with roaming profiles becoming corrupted, requiring frequent resetting. Additionally, with all applications now running within Citrix, the company was struggling to control access policies and the servers weren’t able to allocate resources appropriately.

Wilshaw explains, “With over 800 remote users on 125 Citrix servers, it only takes one user accessing one resource-intensive application and we get complaints that other users are affected with slow logon times and interrupted application sessions. We have a project planning tool which, although mission critical for us, causes undue trouble because of its server resource requirements.”

The final problem was that within Citrix, all users had standardized desktop sessions, meaning all employees working within Citrix have access to the same applications. It didn’t allow users to personalize their desktop session in any way.

Challenges

- Optimize remote access over Citrix
- Control resource-hungry applications
- Allow for personalized user environment

Solution

- Ivanti® Performance Manager
- Ivanti® Environment Manager
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Benefits

- Maximum use of server resources
- Improved login and application response times
- Application resource control
- Optimized user experience

Wilshaw explains: “The sessions are identical, which means you may have access to applications that you do not need or that are not relevant to your position. That is when we turned to Ivanti Environment Manager.”

“Ivanti has enabled us to achieve full user adoption of Citrix as well as 20% improved server efficiency.”

— **Stuart Wilshaw**
Wintel Application Team Member

The Introduction of Ivanti

EDF Energy installed Ivanti Environment Manager as a solution to the personalization requirements and Ivanti Performance Manager to address the resource-hungry applications.

Ivanti Environment Manager takes all the user’s settings and manages that information independent from the session. When a user accesses a desktop session on any device, including a mobile device through the Internet, information about that user is streamed into the session on-demand. The user sees a consistent desktop, fully personalized to their own preferences without the need for cumbersome profiles or complex scripting.

Another Ivanti solution, Ivanti Performance Manager, optimizes application and user environments to ensure maximum hardware utilization with an optimal, consistent quality of service. Using Performance Manager, EDF Energy was able to identify the hungry applications and limit the resources available to them, ensuring there is always enough capacity for every user on the server.

Wilshaw comments, “I was amazed by how much logon times improved. They are a lot quicker and the application profile performance has improved by an estimated 20%. Even better, even with our most resource-intensive application we can now get an extra user onto each Citrix server—six up from five—which is a 20% improvement on server utilization, too.”

EDF Energy has big plans for the future and Wilshaw is anticipating that Ivanti will continue to meet its needs. “We are now looking to use Ivanti Application Control to build even tighter controls around which users are allowed to access which applications,” Wilshaw says. “This will remove the possibility of a user logging onto the wrong database, which is important to comply with regulation protocols. Ivanti Application Control will also help us with our planned server spring clean—removing all the executables that users have downloaded—and we expect that to have a good impact on performance, too.”



www.ivanti.com



1.800.982.2130



sales@ivanti.com

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