# Gymnasium Beekvliet

## Beekvliet grammar school redesigns IT

It is common knowledge that IT has taken a strategic position in education. This has also led to an increase in the risk of IT failure leading to disruption of education.
It is against this background that Hans Vorstenbosch, System Administrator at Gymnasium Beekvliet, decided not to be rushed when a new school management allowed him the to modernize the IT environment.
Hans explains in this reference story what challenges he faced in this project, what considerations have played a role in the choices he made as well as the valuable lessons he has learned.

### Challenges
Extensive image management has a paralyzing effect on the IT-department.

### Solution
Unified and centralized IT management using Scense Workspace Management with support for non-domain computers
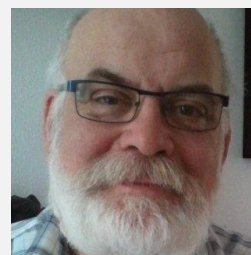
### Benefits
A single golden image for use with any workstation type, increased reliability and more flexibility for students and teachers.

### PC Image management is a nightmare
As within many schools Beekvliet also uses multiple types of computers and different types and versions of operating systems. This leads to many different images with all software components required for a particular type of PC. Images which should be rolled out to all PCs and laptops within the school on a regular basis. This also applies to any Windows updates or other changes. In addition, at a school like Beekvliet, also educational software in these images was a complicating factor.

Hans explains: "Many of the software in use within our school is developed through a collaboration with the University of Utrecht. This software uses, in many cases, different versions of Java clients. As a result, certain programs could not be installed side-by-side within one image.

Besides the necessary time-consuming manual work required for this type of image-management and the risk of errors caused by manual labor, it also limited the flexibility of our students."

**Hans van Vorstenbosch**
System Administrator,
Gymnasium Beekvliet

"We are now able to offer maximum flexibility to our students and teachers."

## Failing IT: exam reviews

As a vivid example of the impact of IT failures within its environment Hans discusses the problems he encountered with the software for the CITO Exam Tester, one of the most important exams for Dutch students. Like many other schools in the Netherlands, Beekvliet encountered problems with the installation and the performance of the review-application during the test itself.

> "During reviews, students should not be distracted by failing IT"

According to Hans, this is a situation that is unacceptable for students and parents. "These exam reviews are key moments in the lives of students and parents. A lot depends on the results of these reviews and they are therefore often very nervous. The school is very eager to avoid any distraction for the student. If students are distracted because of failing IT , that is very frustrating for everyone involved."

After this experience, and from the need to provide students and teachers with more reliability and flexibility, the IT department was asked to look for new approaches and solutions for desktop management and application distribution.

## IT management within schools must meet two requirements

Within our school we discuss IT approaches from two angles" Hans explains. "From the IT management angle: we strive to keep things as simple and standardized as possible. This approach ensures that we will meet the service levels we want. And from an educational angle that tells us that we should not limit students and teachers in their options."

As an example Hans mentions the lack of disaster recovery capabilities caused by the type of desktop management used within the School. It was very hard, if not impossible, to deploy applications to new workstations within an acceptable amount of time in case of disasters.

## Common approaches to desktop delivery

Because of the specific IT issues within schools like Beekvliet, a large number of common approaches to desktop delivery were removed from the list after a thorough evaluation. Hans: "Our software is often so specific, our budgets so modest and our demands regarding reliability so high that solutions such as Terminal Services, Citrix and VDI would not meet our demands."

Terminal Services \ Citrix XenApp - For administrative staff a fine solution but not for educational purposes because much of the software that is specifically designed for schools is not suitable for multi-user operation.

Virtual desktops (VDI) - As with most schools Beekvliet has a relatively small budget available for IT investment. Forthis reason, a VDI environment was a bridge too far. In addition, much of the software in use has some integration with a hardware device. Support within a VDI environment is in these cases not always guaranteed.

> "Finally, we are able to support the student's laptops. A true win-win situation for both student and IT"

Hosted VDI - This model was also evaluated by Beekvliet and rejected because the necessary reliability of the new environment could not be achieved by using hosted solutions. During exam reviews, the environments MUST run smoothly, 100% of the time. No provider was able to guarantee this reliability.

## Scense Workspace Management

During a meeting with other schools on the technical issues surrounding the CITO exam tester software, some of Hans' colleagues mentioned the potential of Scense Workspace Management.

Hans: "A number of IT administrators from other schools recognized my problem and told that they were solved with the use of Scense. This solution seemed so simple that I contacted one of Appixoft's premium partners. They were able to convince me of the value of Scense very quickly." The preparations and execution of the implementation of Scense were started right away. A straightforward process that did not need any modifications in the schools existing infrastructure.

> "Because of the intelligent way Scense uses information from Active Directory, we could integrate two domains into one without any problems."

## No more image management

Hans praises the role of the Appixoft partner during the project. "Without the knowledge and skills of the premium partner, we could not have completed this project successfully. We ask a lot of the consultants because we want to use and leverage multiple methods of application distribution".

For each type of application, Beekvliet needs the best distribution method in place. With the flexibility of Scense and the knowledge of Appixoft's partners, they can.

Hans: "Ultimately Beekvliet will work with one base image with a Scense client installed. The Scense client software will then ensure that all software applications are available to the student at the right time. We are now able to offer maximum flexibility to our students and teachers"

## Lessons learned: get rid of past choices

When asked for lessons to share with future users of Scense, Hans explains that it is important to deal with choices from the past that might have become irrational with a new management solution. Hans gives an example: "Because of the way we conducted IT management in the past, we are currently stuck with two domains within our environment. Because of the intelligent way Scense uses information from Active Directory, we could integrate these domains into one domain without any problems."

## Future plans: Support student's laptops

When asked about the future, Hans responds enthusiastically: "I will soon have my hands free to start a number of projects that add significant value to our education. Many pupils now ask whether they may use their own laptop at school. For the school that is financially very interesting. Scense supports this model and I cannot wait to start implementing this use case!"

## About Appixoft

Through our high-end User Workspace Management solution Scense, we deliver dynamic applications in a personalized workspace to many thousands of satisfied users worldwide. Scense plays a strategic role in delivering functionality and real-time access to the right persons, in time, wherever they happen to be. By doing so, we enable organizations to deliver business-critical applications and information quickly and efficiently. We work towards the ultimate productivity and user experience for both end users and administrators. And with a great sense of honesty: Appixoft provides, Scense delivers!

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