

Onderwijsgroep Noord

Scense Live Profiles is a class act



Onderwijsgroep Noord is a Dutch shared service organization for secondary education, located in the northern city of Groningen. Onderwijsgroep Noord offers a variety of supporting services, including Marketing, HR, Planning & Control and IT, to as much as 23 regional schools. With a staff of 1,400, some 12,000 registered students and no less than 10,000 workstations, the IT-department heavily depends on a sound system of roaming profiles. As both Onderwijsgroep Noord and roaming profiles as such were conceived in the nineties, this flexible way of working has been common for decades, but what about roaming profiles on Windows 10?

Challenges

Offer a consistent roaming profiles experience on Windows 10.

Solution

The implementation of Scense Live Profiles has brought the user experience as well as manageability up to par.

Benefits

Besides solving the roaming profiles problem, application delivery and the workspace in general have now been streamlined

AppiXoft's user profile management solution is a class act!

Bernard Brink joined Onderwijsgroep Noord in 2010 and is currently working as an Information & Automation Consultant. Says Bernard: "Our department is made up of 1 Deputy Director, 4 Consultants, 5 System Administrators/Network Operators, 2 Helpdesk Assistants and 6 Application Administrators, which adds up to a total of 18 people.

In our workplace management team that is involved in the new Scense solution, I work closely together with 4 System Administrators. Within our consultancy team, two consultants are responsible for information and the other two for automation matters. The Information Consultants take care of services such as student administration and our e-learning environment. The other two, including myself, mainly focus on automation, the so-called 'hard' side of I&A.

We make sure that all servers and the network run smoothly and ensure adequate workplace design and application deployment across all locations."



Bernard Brink

I & A Consultant,
Onderwijsgroep Noord

"AppiXoft gave us answers to questions we had not even thought of ourselves"

Recommendations

“Our work also includes purchasing new hardware and supporting European tenders. All four of us are involved in determining the I&A strategy for the next three to five years. Getting all personal settings and configurations right for all users regardless of what particular device in our network they are working from, which is usually one of our many Open Study Centers, is of crucial importance. One of the main problems with roaming profiles in Windows 10 however, is the fact that the profiles themselves are very large. On top of that, the live tiles as well as modern apps are not included. Instead, both are written to a database within each profile, causing a corrupt profile at other workstations. In other words: roaming in Windows 10 doesn’t exactly run like clockwork. Being unfamiliar with third-party companies that could solve these problems, I simply started looking for possible candidates on the internet and by asking people in our network for recommendations. We soon ended up with a shortlist of a handful of companies, including AppiXoft.”

“With their cutting-edge workspace management software, AppiXoft have meanwhile paved the way for remote application delivery outside our own network.”

Pleasant surprise

“What struck me immediately was the fact that the people at AppiXoft responded very quickly and that they were very flexible right from the outset. They also had a great story to tell which encompassed a lot more than we had initially anticipated.

On top of their roaming profiles solution, or **Live Profiles** as they call it themselves, it turned out that the Scense software also provides for very rapid application delivery.

No match made in heaven

With Windows 7 being phased out and the imminent migration to Windows 10, Onderwijsgroep Noord was faced with a challenge. After all, Windows 10 and roaming profiles are no match made in heaven, to say the least. Looking for the right partner to tackle this problem and after a careful selection, Information & Automation Consultant Bernard Brink and some of his colleagues decided to hire AppiXoft to get the job done. A decision Bernard certainly doesn’t regret. Says Bernard: “Besides the fact that their Scense solution has passed the test with flying colors, they even gave us answers to questions we hadn’t even thought of ourselves.”

Given the fact that we manage some thousand applications ranging from, say, veterinarian software teaching students about gestation periods of animals all the way to designing and building the ‘car of the future’, this was a very pleasant surprise. In other words: AppiXoft offered the most comprehensive solution at a favorable price.

To put it in automotive terms: we asked for middle class car with basic functionality and were offered a luxurious self-driving car instead!”

Training on the job

“We used to work with ZENworks which is not entirely up-to-date and is not nearly as user-friendly as Scense. As far as roaming profiles are concerned, the most tangible difference for users is the adjusted application menu. Students working at home generally work from the start menu, which is quite different from the menu installed on devices at school. To avoid the need to switch from one menu to another and back, AppiXoft adopted the standard Microsoft start

menu for use at school devices too, which works a lot more intuitively. By installing applications one by one on-demand instead of everything in one big batch, students can get to work faster too. After awarding the contract, we initially met up with AppiXoft in March 2017. Later that year we included the project in our budget for 2018. In March 2018, an AppiXoft consultant spent about a week on our premises to set up the new environment and provided on-the-job training.”

Workspace Management

“As of September that year, the first locations started making the shift towards the new environment. After transferring basic applications such as Office, Media Player, Flash and Shockwave, all educational applications followed one-by-one. By March 2019 about 40% of all locations were working with Windows 10 and Scense. The transition was made almost trouble-free. I think we only called in the help of AppiXoft about two or three times. Building on the experience gathered meanwhile, I am sure the entire transition will be completed by summer. This is obviously a strict deadline as the new environment must be 100% in place by the time the new school year begins. Using cutting-edge workspace management software, AppiXoft have meanwhile paved the way for remote application delivery outside our own network. As this brings the concept of BYOD as well as group policy settings within reach, they are preparing us for the future and we didn’t even have to ask them.”

File type association

“Telling this reminds me of a little anecdote with regard to File Type Association. FTA is used to define what designated software will be used to execute specific actions such as opening files. You can imagine that some users, for instance, may prefer to open PDFs using Adobe Acrobat Pro while others apply Adobe Reader or any other PDF viewer. It turned out that Microsoft only allows end-users to perform such instructions, for safety reasons. As this functionality was essentially mandatory, AppiXoft dove in and wouldn’t stop until the final piece of the puzzle was in place. They showed the same perseverance in solving a similar problem with the default browser settings.”

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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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