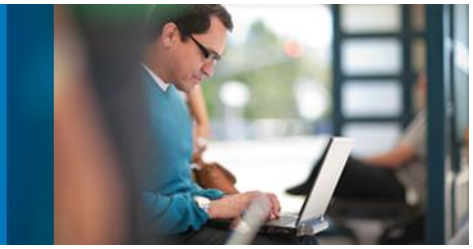
CITRIX

Customer Spotlight



Windesheim

Secure, scalable and flexible cloud for 25,000 students and staff

Windesheim provides quality higher education and acts according to its identity, which has its origin in the Christian religion and culture and therein rooted philosophical beliefs and inspirations. With over 20,300 students, thousands of students and 1,800 employees at locations in Zwolle and Almere, Windesheim is one of the largest universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands. Windesheim wants to rank among the top three of the major colleges in the Netherlands with the motto 'Reaching for the top'.

Industry:
Education

Key Benefits:

- Fast access for 25,000 students and staff
- One secure solution for all data communication, both intern and extern
- Virtual appliances simplifies server application migrations
- Flexible, scalable and future-proof solution

Citrix Products:

- Citrix NetScaler SDX cluster with HA pair

The challenge: Increase capacity for cloud traffic

To secure and accelerate the Internet connection, the university college for many years used Microsoft Internet Security and Acceleration (ISA) Server 2006 as a reverse proxy and F5 load balancers. "Windesheim increasingly wants students to be able to study independent of place and time. In addition, employees have more demands to work from home. This results in a substantial increase of application access over the Internet. NetScaler enables Windesheim to unlock applications to the internet, securely and optimized," says Kees Kamphuis, Coordinator Infrastructure at Windesheim. "Besides the growing demand, the ISA server was due for replacement and the support of the load balancers ended. We wanted to replace both solutions by one product with combined functionality. An additional requirement was that the new solution had to support claims-based authentication for single sign-on (SAML 2.0)."

The solution: Citrix NetScaler SDX for all communications

To an RFP by Windesheim, five parties made an offer but only one of them provided a Citrix solution. "We did not use any Citrix technology, but we selected the Citrix NetScaler solution because it best met our requirements in terms of high availability, throughput, SSL offloading, the number of simultaneous sessions and flexibility," continues Kamphuis. "The initial introduction - along with Citrix Consulting - went very smoothly. We already had prepared an IP plan for configuring the Netscaler, so the Citrix Netscaler consultant had the system operational within half a day. Then, gradually applications were added to the NetScaler, such as Lync, Exchange and SharePoint." On two NetScaler SDX appliances, one node in the production datacenter and the second node in the disaster recovery data center, now run five virtual NetScalers in HA mode.

Phone calls without an hitch

Windesheim uses Microsoft Lync for telephony. This was the first service implemented through the NetScaler and requires highly stable and smooth operation, with good call quality. “In the previous environment we had great difficulty in properly load balancing this service, but after initial configuration of the Citrix NetScaler this worked immediately very well," adds Kamphuis. “Nice to note, the annual independent risk assessment by Microsoft this year focused on Lync. The outcome was that our Lync deployment was unique in terms of installation and performance. This is the best compliment Citrix can get for its NetScaler solution.”

Secure access for 25,000 students and staff

Using the NetScaler, the Exchange and SharePoint servers are securely opened up to the Windesheim network and the Internet. The servers are also load balanced to improve performance and increase availability. After extensive testing, the existing web access solution for email, Outlook Anywhere, is transferred almost one-to-one to NetScaler. Next, access to the SharePoint environment is implemented. Now, 25,000 students and staff use NetScaler for SharePoint and webmail, but also to synchronize their smartphone or tablet internally and externally and even during the weekend. With the previous solution, this was a very tough application but now it is barely noticed. “I am very excited about Citrix NetScaler. All our services are monitored, optimized, accelerated and secured via a single physical device with virtual machines, with 24x7 availability, a very good performance and easy to manage with the management console and reusable building blocks,” Kamphuis adds.

Virtually unlimited scalability

“In the old environment we could not add anything more, but now the possibilities are almost endless. We already run several other internal services over NetScaler, including Oracle, our roster package and the externally accessible website of Windesheim.” The flexibility of NetScaler makes migrating much easier. To upgrade Exchange 2010 and Lync 2010, the new versions of Exchange and Lync are built on an additional virtual NetScaler, tested and then released by simply switching virtual NetScalers. “Another big advantage of Citrix is that we may use all the features, now and in the future, as a result of the licensing model we selected. The limitations are more determined by our knowledge than what the device can handle,” Kamphuis concludes. “We aim to unlock all applications via NetScaler, from client/server applications, our video portal to access to our file shares.”

Looking ahead

In the future, Windesheim plans to enable secure access to network shares via Direct Access for telecommuting. Also, the university will relieve application servers by moving claims-based authentication from the applications to the NetScaler. Ultimately, the DMZ will be dismantled completely by locating all servers on the internal network, for additional security and easier system administration by enabling domain connectivity.

About Citrix
Citrix (NASDAQ:CTXS) is a leader in virtualization, networking and cloud infrastructure to enable new ways for people to work better. Citrix solutions help IT and service providers to build, manage and secure, virtual and mobile workspaces that seamlessly deliver apps, desktops, data and services to anyone, on any device, over any network or cloud. This year Citrix is celebrating 25 years of innovation, making IT simpler and people more productive with mobile workstyles. With annual revenue in 2013 of $2.9 billion, Citrix solutions are in use at more than 330,000 organizations and by over 100 million people globally. Learn more at www.citrix.com

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