JRF
JOSEPH
ROWNTREE
FOUNDATION

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION

Phoenix Software brings Citrix up-to-speed for Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is a social policy research and development charity based in York. JRF's relationship with Phoenix has spanned nearly two decades; with its most recent engagements being the migration of its email platform to a hybrid on-premise/Office 365 solution and upgrading JRF's remote-access solution to NetScaler. Given the strength and longevity of the relationship between the two organisations, Phoenix Software was naturally JRF's first choice to conduct a complete health check and refresh of its Citrix remote desktop environment.

CHALLENGE

JRF had been operating a Citrix XenApp remote desktop environment for over a decade. While their team of talented in-house engineers had deployed incremental hardware and software upgrades to maximise the lifespan of the environment, it was broadly accepted that the existing hardware had reached its natural end-of-life and

AT-A-GLANCE

Challenge
Citrix XenApp virtual desktop environment had reached its natural end-of-life. A replacement desktop solution was required to maintain adequate performance for the 140+ desktop users.

Solution
New HP servers running in a new VMware vSphere cluster. JRF stayed on a Citrix XenApp environment but upgraded from version 6 to 7.5 (JRF's team later upgraded to 7.9 themselves).

Benefits
Highly cost-efficient due to extending the lifespan of its existing Citrix assets instead of 'rip and replace'. Improved performance, longevity and reliability at a significantly lower cost than an entirely new solution. JRF is also able to maintain its own infrastructure, yielding additional cost savings.

a replacement desktop solution was required to maintain adequate performance. Given the scale of the project (140+ desktops), the criticality of the desktop environment to the Foundation's day-to-day operations, and the specific product and technical knowledge required, JRF sought independent experts to evaluate its current setup and make recommendations for the future. JRF was keen to evaluate all options, including whether or not to continue down the Citrix path at all.

"We were open to all recommendations on how to move forward with our desktop environment," commented Jamie Greaves, Head of IT & Information Services at Joseph Rowntree Foundation. "While Citrix had served us well for a decade, we knew that technology had moved on a long way during this time. We, therefore, wanted independent experts to look at our requirements with fresh eyes and make recommendations accordingly, irrespective of what we had used before. No option was off the table."
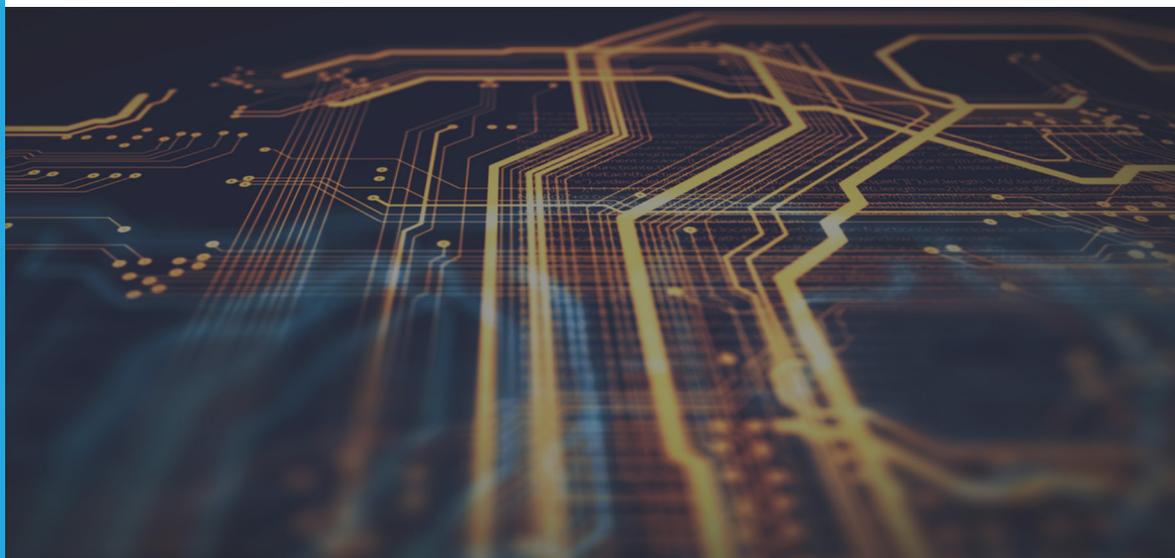
SOLUTION

JRF had embarked on numerous hardware upgrades prior to the evaluation of its Citrix desktop environment. In fact, its own team had successfully virtualised the rest of its core infrastructure, most recently deploying an upgraded SAN in preparation for the expected virtual desktop upgrade further down the line. Given the significant performance gains of its new SAN, JRF was convinced that virtualising its Citrix environment was the logical next step but it needed the experts to define the exact specifications.

JRF has 140+ Citrix thin clients operating across multiple sites in the North East of England which all connect to a central server infrastructure in York. Once Phoenix had evaluated JRF's requirements and existing infrastructure, it recommended that JRF maintain a Citrix upgrade path. It was determined this approach would deliver the best performance available while also making the most of JRF's existing Citrix investments and minimising potential hardware and software compatibility issues. It was also the most cost-effective solution.

Phoenix deployed new HP servers running in a new VMware vSphere cluster and carried out a migration of Citrix XenApp from version 6 to 7.5 (JRF's team were later able to upgrade to 7.9 themselves). JRF's own team were able to take advantage of the organisation's SSD fronted NetApp SAN to offer enhanced performance, in addition to replicating it to a DR site for the additional benefit of offsite Disaster Recovery.

"While Citrix had served us well for a decade, we knew that technology had moved on a long way during this time. We, therefore, wanted independent experts to look at our requirements with fresh eyes and make recommendations accordingly, irrespective of what we had used before. No option was off the table"

Jamie Greaves
Head of IT & Information Services
Joseph Rowntree Foundation

BENEFITS

The benefits to upgrading the existing Citrix environment were numerous for JRF:

Highly cost efficient – by extending the lifespan of its existing Citrix assets, JRF was able to increase performance, longevity and reliability at a significantly lower cost of an entirely new solution.

Self-service – given the familiarity of Citrix to JRF's in-house team, and the collaborative working relationship between both companies during the implementation, JRF is able to maintain its own infrastructure, yielding additional cost savings.

Improved performance and lifespan – JRF has seen significant improvements in desktop performance with little-to-no visible change for end users.

Disaster recovery – JRF was able to make the most of the virtualised environment by replicating the organisation's SAN to a remote site for Disaster Recovery.

One team – Phoenix Software's collaborative approach with JRF's onsite team helped to ensure the project was delivered on time and without any major obstacles. Greaves explains:

"We're a small, collaborative team at JRF and we know our infrastructure inside-out. We, therefore, like to be involved in all projects when an external supplier is involved, as ultimately we're responsible for its maintenance once the project is complete."

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

To find out how we can help you transform any aspect of your IT estate, contact the Phoenix Team now on:

01904 562200
hello@phoenixs.co.uk