

Alcorn State University: The Journey to VDI

Background

Alcorn State University is a four year university located in Lorman, Mississippi, and has received nationwide recognition for excellence in liberal arts, agricultural research, technology, music, and nursing. Felton Square, Senior Multimedia Architect for Alcorn State, investigated VDI in the past, but concluded it was cost prohibitive versus buying desktop computers. “We looked at low computing solutions which were cheaper, but they were limited in features. The HVE VDI appliances provide a more robust, proven solution which is a perfect fit for our computer labs,” said Square.

What made Square choose HVE for VDI? Square stated, “We also looked at other brands and competitors and asked them to do an apples-for-apples comparison of the equipment to match the HVE solution. Through that comparison, we found that HVE was around 20-30 percent lower in cost. Moreover, HVE was not only able to accomplish our goals at a better price point; they did so without needing to sacrifice performance.”

The HVE Solution

HVE evaluated Alcorn State’s requirements and determined that the solution should address the immediate needs of the computer lab, but provide for future growth. HVE proposed a HVE-101-N VDI appliance. The initial installation was one lab of 35 virtual desktops. The HVE-101-N would give ASU the potential to add more virtual desktops, providing room for expansion. The computer lab utilized repurposed computers configured as thin clients. Since no equipment was purchased, the cost for this initial project was dramatically reduced.

“Being able to effectively repurpose older computers made this transition much smoother, since we did not have to spend hours swapping out hardware,” explains Square.

The HVE appliances were installed, and the environment was set up and configured in two days. HVE devoted another two days to train the IT department to support the virtual desktop environment.

What has been the result of this initial installation of the HVE VDI solution? “Our desktop support team has not had to touch that lab for the entire semester,” stated Square. “It has freed up some time to allow us to focus on other projects.”

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Profile

Location: Lorman, Mississippi

Students: 4000

Staff: 800

Overview

Number of Virtual Desktops: 90 - 100 concurrent desktops

Who is using Virtual Desktops?

- Main Campus Library
- Meridian Shopping Mall

Hardware:

- (1) HVE-101-N at Main Campus
- (1) HVE-51-N at Meridian Mall

The Future for Alcorn State

Alcorn State plans on expanding their HVE-101-N to fully utilize the appliance. All HVE VDI appliances have Teradici Apex cards which optimize the bandwidth and provide VDI offloading. Alcorn State will use this technology along with the zero terminals to remotely manage the devices. This change will improve the support response time from hours to minutes.

Another part of the project was updating the remote technology classroom located in the shopping mall in Meridian, Mississippi. Alcorn State will use VDI in this independent classroom environment. The HVE-51-N was purchased for this portion of the solution. "With VDI we can access the classroom environment and virtual desktops remotely and support them from our main campus. This means we do not have to be onsite. This saves time that can be used on other matters," said Square.

Alcorn State also is planning a classroom technology center with a scheduled opening in 2019. "We are planning on putting VDI in all the computer labs and classrooms," said Square. "In addition to VDI, this building will be our online education office and we intend to use HVE servers and storage."

Outcomes and Conclusions

While Alcorn State is early in their journey into VDI, they are fully convinced of the power of VDI and how HVE has perfected virtualization.

How well has this initial VDI implementation worked for Alcorn State? As mentioned previously, Mr. Square is very impressed with the lack of support issues in that lab. The transition to VDI was seamless to the students and their daily experience is flawless. This has greatly impressed Square and convinces him that Alcorn State made the right choice.

What was Mr. Square's opinion about the service and support HVE provides? He commented, "Technology support is a key factor to me. Without good support from a company the technology is useless. I can call HVE support and get help anytime. My sales representative is always available if I need anything. This means a lot to me."

About HVE ConneXions

HVE's engineering philosophy is to create Manageable, Scalable, and Reproducible and Predictable (MSRP) solutions. We base our solutions on proven virtualization technologies running on high-performance, next generation hardware. The result is an overall cost-effective and high-performance environment that scales to customers' needs.

"Since the installation, our desktop support team has not had to touch that lab."

-Felton Square,

*Senior Multimedia Architect
Alcorn State University*



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