

PostFinance

PostFinance modernizes front-end systems—and improves quality of work for users—with Micro Focus® Reflection® Desktop for X.

Overview

Headquartered in Bern, Switzerland, PostFinance is a full-service financial institute that serves 2.3 million customers via 2,500 post offices and 28 service centers. All PostFinance's business-critical applications, including payment transaction applications, reside on Hewlett-Packard machines running OpenVMS. These core applications are accessed by users in multiple areas, such as customer service, back office, and sales.

The company, a subsidiary of Swiss Post, wanted to improve the efficiency of its IT operation. "We wanted to respond more flexibly to the demands of the market while also improving the work processes of our 1,600 users," said Fauzia Candrian, head of ZV IS GUI and Evaluations at PostFinance. To that end, PostFinance modernized the GUI of its front-end systems with Reflection Desktop for X.

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FAUZIA CANDRIAN

Head of ZV-IS GUI and Evaluations
PostFinance

Challenge

PostFinance users accessed the company's core applications for domestic payment transactions (ZV-IS) in two different ways: Eight hundred users were equipped with PCs running Reflection Desktop for X, PC X server software. Seven hundred users were equipped with PCs and OpenVMS workstations.

The Reflection Desktop for X users were able to access Windows applications, email, the Internet, along with the company's core applications. Built with integrated GLX support, Reflection Desktop for X can render and display 2D/3D graphical X Window applications with unrivaled speed and accuracy. The central server transmitted data to the Reflection Desktop for X server in X-11 protocol format. The Reflection Desktop for X server then used this data to generate an emulated Windows GUI.

For the 700 other users, however, day-to-day work was cumbersome. A switch box connected to the workstation and the PC allowed them to switch back and forth between the Windows applications and the core applications. But this hybrid solution was time-consuming and error-prone. For example, simple cut-and-paste operations were impossible. When users needed to import a customer number from a core application into an Office document, they had to write it down and enter it manually—when the



At a Glance

■ Industry

Financial Services

■ Location

Switzerland

■ Challenge

The process of accessing applications was time-consuming and error-prone, with negative impacts on customer service.

■ Solution

Deploy Reflection Desktop for X on new PCs, rather than updating OpenVMS workstations, to streamline information access.

■ Results

- + Saved the replacement cost of new workstations.
- + Reduced customer wait times.
- + Simplified and streamlined work processes.
- + Minimized user errors and improved customer service.

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required application was active. Ultimately, the lack of integration between applications had a negative impact on customer service.

Solution

To meet its work flow objectives while holding costs down, PostFinance decided to replace the 700 workstations with new PCs running Reflection Desktop for X. Because the IT team was already familiar with the product, very little external consulting services were needed. That fact, combined with our company's stability and financial security, solidified the decision.

Candrian and her 14-person team executed the project in multiple stages. The first step was to see how users worked with the system. Then favorite features from the old hybrid world were implemented in the new environment. For example, the old Digital keyboards had twenty function keys, while a PC keyboard has only twelve, so the team reprogrammed the control and shift keys to maintain the familiar keyboard.

The realization phase began with a pilot installation at the Bern headquarters and a second operations center in St. Gallen. About twenty users were involved, and the experience gained there proved useful for the implementation. Before all ZV-IS-GUI users could work on PCs running Reflection Desktop for X, the obsolete application servers had to be replaced. Powerful new servers were installed in each of the operation centers over several weekends. “Our people tested the system on Saturday and then resolved problems and issues immediately,” said Candrian. This process ensured “business as usual” on Monday morning.

The workplaces needed to be prepared as well. The team needed to upgrade PC memory, replace old PCs and all monitors smaller than 18 inches, install PC keyboards, and install the Reflection Desktop for X software.

The final step was user training. On rollout day, project managers were on site with developers to ensure that users received immediate support in the event of any problems. Using this staged approach, one operations center per month was switched over to the new technology.

Results

The hard work and detailed planning paid off. “Our users now have uniform access to their systems, and the expansion potential that we have gained fits our IT architecture concept well,” said Candrian. What's more, users no longer need to switch between systems—saving users' time, streamlining work flow, and improving overall customer service. The error rate is also reduced since the copy function allows data to be pasted into target applications.

“We are pleased that the operative departments are so satisfied with the new solution and are reporting significant improvements in their processes,” said Candrian. What's more, a simple comparison of the two options—the purchase of new workstations versus Reflection Desktop for X—shows that the new solution will quickly pay for itself.

About Micro Focus

The Micro Focus product portfolios enable enterprise customers to unlock the value in their business data and logic to improve their competitive advantage through innovation. www.microfocus.com



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