



Windows Vista Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: Netherlands Ministry of Defense

Web Site: www.mindef.nl

Customer Size: 75,000 employees

Country or Region: The Netherlands

Industry: Government

Customer Profile

The Netherlands Ministry of Defense is responsible for the national security of this European country of 16 million inhabitants. The Ministry employs 75,000 people in 300 locations.

Software and Services

- Windows Vista™
- Microsoft® Services

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Netherlands Ministry of Defense Enhances Desktop Interoperability and Stability

“The use of Windows Vista will allow us to reduce IT costs by 10 percent annually.”

Christ van Gestel, Business Unit Manager of Uniform Desktop Services, Defense Telematics Organization, Netherlands Ministry of Defense

The Netherlands Ministry of Defense was ordered by the Dutch government to cut costs. The 75,000-person agency is adopting the Windows Vista™ operating system to help trim desktop computer deployment and support costs by 10 percent annually. The software's easier use and improved stability will improve worker productivity by reducing computer failures and ease application migration between Windows® XP and Windows Vista.

Business Needs

The Netherlands Ministry of Defense encompasses the Netherlands' three military branches, The Royal Netherlands Marechaussee military police corps, border patrol, and other national security and defense functions. The agency employs 75,000 military and civilian personnel in 300 locations.

As with most governmental agencies, the Ministry's budget fluctuates with political winds, but the general trend has been toward tightening, rather than expanding, spending. The trickle-down effect for the Defense Ministry's IT staff was a mandate to cut costs by 10 percent annually. This staff

of 2,500 people manages more than 50,000 desktop computers and 800 server computers located in three main data centers. The IT staff had already achieved significant cost reductions through a major server consolidation effort, reducing 3,000 servers in 300 locations to 1,000 servers in three locations.

The latest round of cost reductions would target the organization's 50,000 desktop computers. All run some version of the Windows® XP operating system, so the agency has a standard desktop configuration with good security. However, there are still frequent failures caused by conflicts between the operating system and the



nearly 700 commercial and custom applications the agency uses. Although the IT staff performs extensive compatibility testing, it's impossible to test every possible application combination.

Each time a computer fails, the IT staff has to spend two hours reinstalling the software image. Approximately 10 percent of the Ministry's computers have to be reinstalled annually because of software problems, resulting in about 200 hours of weekly desktop repair work—enough to keep a staff of 10 people busy full time. A related job is building a new Remote Installation Service (RIS) image every quarter for all 50,000 desktop computers, a two-week job for multiple staffers.

"Besides using IT staff time, desktop instability impacted user productivity," explains Christ van Gestel, Business Unit Manager of Uniform Desktop Services in the Ministry's Defense Telematics Organization. "Even though users could continue their work at other computers [using roaming user profiles], it was still an interruption."

Solution

The Ministry made the decision to be an early adopter of the Windows Vista™ operating system, which promised improved application stability and streamlined image deployment. The company joined the Microsoft® Windows Vista Technology Adoption Program and deployed the software on 125 desktop computers. Microsoft Services provided assistance with the Ministry's Windows Vista rollout, and the local Microsoft Specialist Technical Unit complemented that work by providing assistance with Microsoft management products, including Microsoft Systems Management Server 2003 and Windows Deployment Services.

"We spent a lot of time and money rolling out previous operating systems to our user base, and we decided to get ahead of the technology curve with Windows Vista, rolling it out early and gradually," says Remko Kamp, Windows Vista Project Manager at the Ministry. The Ministry hopes to start upgrading its 50,000 desktop computers in early 2008.

The Ministry hopes to create a more stable operating environment from the improved application compatibility and isolation features in Windows Vista, a single RIS image, and elimination of Dynamic Link Library incompatibilities. The Ministry also expects fewer problems in migrating from Windows XP to Windows Vista. All these improvements will contribute to a more stable environment in which employees will encounter fewer application conflicts and failures. The improved reliability of Windows Vista also means fewer user disruptions and easier recovery when disruptions occur.

The Ministry is also taking advantage of Windows Vista features that enhance end user productivity. "The Windows Vista interface is a big deal to us," van Gestel says. "Our pilot has shown that the new look makes it easier for users to find information, which improves their productivity and reduces support costs."

Benefits

The move to Windows Vista will allow the Netherlands Ministry of Defense to meet its goal of reducing IT expenses by 10 percent annually, while also improving worker productivity.

- **Annual 10 percent reduction in IT costs.** Application compatibility and reliability improvements in Windows Vista will give

the Ministry a more stable desktop, which will reduce the number of desktop failures requiring IT attention by 50 percent. However, when the IT staff does need to repair systems, Windows Vista will cut software deployment times in half. Specifically, Windows Vista image-based deployment will reduce deployment of individual desktop images from two hours to one hour and reduce monthly image builds from two weeks to one week.

"The use of Windows Vista will allow us to reduce IT costs by 10 percent annually," van Gestel says. "We'll achieve a five percent reduction from reduced desktop deployment costs and another five percent reduction from lower desktop support costs."

- **Improved worker productivity.** A more stable desktop environment will also benefit the Ministry's 50,000 information workers, who will experience fewer interruptions due to computer problems. "We have run several of our nearly 700 applications on Windows Vista for several months with almost no failures," van Gestel says.

Kamp and van Gestel look forward to exploring how the Ministry might benefit from other Windows Vista features such as Windows BitLocker™ Drive Encryption, which could replace a third-party encryption product the Ministry now uses. Windows Vista also enables client-based document sharing, which would simplify file sharing for users and use less disk space.