



Staybridge Suites Tallahassee

Staybridge Suites wanted to provide its guests with in-room desktop computing, but a traditional desktop PC solution would have been difficult to manage. Instead, the hotel created a virtual client environment with SUSE® Linux Enterprise Desktop that is easy to manage and provides guests with easy access to the Internet and other applications.

Overview

Staybridge Suites, the extended-stay brand of the InterContinental Hotels Group, offers spacious suites, full kitchens and numerous upscale amenities including recreational and fitness facilities, business services, and other in-room accommodations. Located adjacent to the Mainline Information Systems headquarters, Staybridge Suites Hotel of Tallahassee is one of the first hotels to offer thin-client workstations in all of its 104 rooms.

Challenge

With an increasing number of business travelers, hotels often serve as remote offices for many guests. Hotels are responding to increasing technology requirements such as wireless Internet access, as well as business centers with on-site computers and printers. As an extended-stay luxury hotel, Staybridge Suites wanted to provide Internet access and other technology services to its guests.

Staybridge Suites selected virtual desktops delivered with thin clients as a means of providing its guests with a desktop in every room, ensuring each guest's privacy and security. The hotel evaluated traditional PCs, but found the solution more costly, as well as time-consuming to manage. However, by leveraging thin clients, it could provide

guests with a "clean-slate" desktop at every check-in without the need to sanitize the system for the guest upon check-out.

Solution

To manage the hotel-wide deployment, Staybridge Suites engaged Mainline Information Systems, a Novell Platinum Partner™ and number-one Premiere Business Partner for IBM. The hotel and Mainline evaluated Microsoft* Windows* desktops, but found that SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop was a fraction of the cost, would provide a feature-rich desktop experience for guests, was a solid platform for supporting open-standards applications such as OpenOffice and Mozilla Firefox*, and was an excellent fit for the hotel's thin-client strategy.

"Once we made the decision to move to Linux, I immediately knew that SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop was the answer," said Donn Bullock, Program Director of Virtual Client Solutions at Mainline Information Systems, Inc. "My experience with service and support from Novell® has been nothing but positive compared to others. Novell will bend over backwards to resolve any support issues and the quality of the products is unmatched."

Staybridge Suites Tallahassee at a glance:

Extended-stay hotel brand of the InterContinental Hotels Group

■ Industry:

Hospitality

■ Location:

United States

■ Solutions:

SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop

■ Results:

- Set a new standard for in-room hotel computing
- Created a thin-client environment with greater flexibility and security than a traditional PC solution
- Reduced total cost of ownership by 35 percent
- Reduced power consumption by 70 percent

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Donn Bullock

*Program Director of Virtual Client Solutions
Mainline Information Systems, Inc.*



“We like the fact that we don’t need a large staff to manage our thin-client desktops. With just a single administrator, we can maintain IT control and security, while giving our users a great clean-slate desktop experience and a unique offering within the travel and hospitality industry.”

George Banks

*Operations Manager for Summit Group Commercial Properties,
management firm of the Staybridge Suites hotel construction*

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To build the virtual client environment, Mainline installed a Devon IT 6020B thin client in each of the hotel’s 104 guest rooms to offer a virtual session of SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop to guests on demand. In addition, guests are also provided with server-based access to the Firefox browser for Internet access, as well as the OpenOffice.org productivity suite which offers complete compatibility with Microsoft Office applications.

The thin-client terminal in each room uses the industry-standard Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) to connect to a virtual machine within one of currently three IBM* BladeCenter* blade servers connected to an IBM fiber channel SAN. With VMware* V13 as the virtualization foundation, each blade can run up to 25 concurrent virtual desktops.

“Although many of our guests bring their own laptops, we wanted to give them an easy and quick option to other activities, such as reading news or checking stocks on the Internet, accessing their Web-based e-mail, making travel arrangements or even reviewing documents without having to open their computers,” said George Banks, Operations Manager for Summit Group Commercial Properties, management firm of the Staybridge Suites hotel construction. “Such flexibility and access to technology is a clear advantage for our extended-stay guests.”

A thin-client computing environment is easy to manage, requiring just one or two

IT personnel who can manage everything remotely. Because each virtual desktop is automatically destroyed when a user logs off, the hotel can ensure that every new guest is offered a completely new desktop at check-in. This ensures guest privacy, while eliminating the need for administrative staff to manually refresh each desktop.

Results

By using SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop with VMware and IBM blade servers, Mainline created a thin-client computing environment that provides Staybridge Suites with secure desktop access in every guest room. The hotel moved to Linux* for a fraction of the cost of a traditional PC solution.

The hotel’s virtual computing environment requires only a single administrator, which contributes to an estimated reduction in total ownership costs of 35 percent. Virtual servers also reduce power consumption by 70 percent compared to a PC solution.

“Without Novell and Mainline, we could not have afforded to provide desktop computing throughout the hotel,” said Banks. “SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop is an innovative solution that sets a new standard for in-room computing. And Mainline’s Virtual Client Solutions program is clearly establishing the company as a leader in this new and emerging market space for virtualizing the desktop client environment.”



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