

## Bolton Primary Care Trust Case study



### Implementing a smart solution

Bolton Primary Care Trust (PCT) is a vital resource to the Borough of Bolton, serving the healthcare needs of over a quarter of a million citizens. As a leading health organisation in the North West, the Trust exists to improve the region's health, shaping its services to deliver high quality care to the local community. The immense scale of its operations places a constant demand on the Trust's 1,500 committed workers across two main locations and numerous remote sites in the Borough.

The proactive adoption of thin computing using Wyse thin clients and Citrix has enabled Bolton PCT to implement smart card technology under the National Programme for IT (NPfIT) with great success. As a result, the Trust has been able to comply with the developing programme, provide access to critical applications and safeguard patient record data. At the same time it has significantly reduced the cost and time needed to support multiple users across a wide geography.

### Taking Action

Dan Milman is Registration Authority Project Manager at Bolton PCT. Part of a 13-man registration, technical development and support team, he is responsible for defining access to the national programme systems and ensuring that all policies and procedures are in place. As part of the Trust's commitment to NPfIT, Milman and the registration team embarked on a project to implement smart cards in March 2005. "We started looking at the scope of the project in terms of where smart cards needed to be deployed, what applications were to be accessed and what hardware and software staff would need to access them" says Milman. "The aim was to provide a security and access protocol that would allow staff to access the applications they need, but only at a level that is correct for their job role" he adds. Milman completed his research into implementing smart cards during the Spring.

With its operations spread widely across the Borough, the Trust was already experiencing the benefits of a thin computing infrastructure. "We have 2 main sites, which are PC based, and 30 other remote sites using thin clients. With this many sites spread over a wide geography, so many things can go wrong. We'd chosen several years ago to use thin client technology based on Citrix for

the simple reason that it was so much easier to manage and support. Apart from the possibility of a thin client desktop device failing, nothing else can wrong at the sites". The team agreed that Citrix should continue to be at the heart of the Trust's smart card implementation.

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Liaising with the NPfIT team and Citrix Value Added Reseller and IT Consultancy, Novus Group, Milman established that the team was working with Citrix to develop software that enabled smart card users to access the Spine User Database – their essential point of access to the applications they would need to fulfil their roles. Milman trialled the software within the Trust's Citrix server farm, running MetaFrame XP. "We created a test area and configured some simple policies on the Citrix servers, made sure that it was working properly and tested all of the different NPfIT applications".

Between May and June the team trialled the initial software as well as a number of vendors' Linux, Windows CE and Windows XPe thin client devices. "Novus helped us throughout the process, providing and configuring test servers and also the desktop thin client hardware" says Milman. "Their help enabled us to start purchasing and rolling out the infrastructure more efficiently. We decided to replace and extend the current thin client hardware with around 550 Windows CE based Wyse Winterm S30 devices because they worked best with the smart card readers. The low cost, small size and ease of managing the devices were also key reasons for choosing Wyse".

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## Achieving Objectives

In August and September Novus worked with Milman and his team to roll out the Wyse thin clients and smart card readers. "We were able to issue staff with smart cards from 1<sup>st</sup> October" says Milman. "To staff at the main 2 sites, 30 remote sites and also 54 GP practices we provided over 1200 cards. Once users are registered on the Spine User Database, their details are imported into the smart card management system, creating a link between the two systems. When they then log onto the system using their thin client desktop and a smart card reader, software on the Citrix server looks at the digital certificate on their card and communicates with the Spine to verify their access rights. They then choose the role they need to work under, allowing them to access the NPfIT application and the information they are allowed to see".

The aim of using a Citrix and Wyse thin client infrastructure was to provide users at remote sites access to essential applications on the Spine whilst minimising the support implications. "Our remote users are now successfully accessing the applications they need while our support staff are effectively managing the infrastructure at significantly lower cost". The biggest benefit however has been the amount of time the solution saves the team. "We can quickly identify where a problem exists and resolve it swiftly without having to visit a user at their desktop".

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Milman concludes: "The system works so well for us now. Whilst we had already realised some of the benefits of thin computing, expanding the use of a Citrix and Wyse platform to facilitate the rollout of smart cards has proved to be a very good move".

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Dan Milman Registration Authority Project Manager



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