Designing a zero-downtime experience for your end users using "digital lockers"

A key focus area within the digital workplace today is fostering customer experience and intimacy. Enterprises increasingly realize that a superior end-user experience is a prime driver of operational efficiency, and have tried to provide this through many strategies; BYOD, VDI, or lightweight tablet devices. While these initiatives have helped, they only treat the symptom and not the underlying problem which is that end-user devices and endpoints can and do frequently crash. Moreover, the impact is not just limited to a single employee, but affects the entire enterprise. Due to the hyper-networked nature of work colleagues, partners and customers of the employee must put their interactions on hold until the IT team restores normal operations. This results in a loss of productivity that is estimated to be 4 to 5 times higher. User experience monitoring, can help enterprises identify such events ahead of time, but their effectiveness is minimized if the issue is due to a hardware failure, where the only solution is to provide employees with a replacement endpoint quickly, efficiently and with simplicity.

Traditional models do not cut it

Enterprises have traditionally used two models to solve this problem. Either they have looked to onsite field engineers to provide replacement endpoints to end users, or they have looked at VDI to eliminate the dependency on the endpoint. However, these models have both failed due to the varied nature of the workplace ecosystem. Having a dedicated field engineer present at smaller sites such as sales offices can be cost prohibitive, while VDI is dependent on excellent network connectivity to ensure day to day functioning and in turn, severely restrict the mobility of road warriors. In this whitepaper, we will explain how a business can drive a better near-zero downtime user experience for their employees through digital lockers.

Planning for digital Lockers

A digital locker is a digitally access controlled physical locker, with multiple bays that can be utilized by end users to return an endpoint, or pick up a new endpoint, within minutes, without requiring the intervention of on-site field services. Digital lockers thereby enable a zero-downtime experience for end users in a cost-effective manner. However, an essential prerequisite to achieving this is building a seamless mechanism to transfer applications, data, and settings from the existing endpoint to the new endpoint.

Today, multiple models of digital lockers are available with the basic versions providing granular bay-by-bay access, while advanced models offer network interfaces for remotely managing endpoints and, office-in-a-box capabilities on which enterprise IT can run virtual workloads. We believe that digital lockers are not just a tool to provide a better break-fix service, but a chance to rethink and transform your existing support model. Here are a few key aspects to consider when introducing digital lockers:

- Should you use digital lockers only for break-fix issues or do you use it to automate the entire field services lifecycle?

- Should you look at digital lockers only for remote sites or use them in conjunction with existing field service models to reduce existing workloads?

- How do you integrate your existing asset management and ITSM systems with the digital lockers?

- How do you seamlessly migrate applications, data, and settings from the existing endpoint to the new endpoint?

- How do you integrate your existing OEM services and 3rd party field services with the laptop locker ecosystem?

The six fundamental principles to designing a zero-downtime experience for your end users using digital lockers

Design for the entire service spectrum and the full estate

Business downtime needs to be reduced, irrespective of whether it is because of a failed

Digital lockers are not just a tool to provide a better break-fix service, but a chance to rethink and transform your existing support model.

endpoint or a new employee without one. Design your laptop locker to provide zero-downtime experience across the end user lifecycle, and across your locations. For critical peripherals (keyboards, monitors) use vending machines (like digital lockers, but based on retail vending machines) to provide a seamless integrated zero-downtime experience.

Choose an out-of-the-box experience

Digital lockers provide the best user experience when users can quickly return to their work. Long lead times required for reengineering or for process approvals destroys the user experience. Eliminate user wait times by opting for an OOB (Out-of-the-box) experience with your endpoints, or ensure that your remote management team reconfigures these machines right after they are installed within the digital lockers, and much before you allocate them to users.

Decouple the workspace and the endpoint

To allow seamless migration of the workspace (applications, data, and settings) from the old to the new endpoint, look at decoupling the workspace from the rest of the endpoint, through profile virtualization services or EFSS solutions like OneDrive and Dropbox. If you cannot put your data in the Cloud due to regulatory reasons, use the advanced features available on your digital lockers to run file-share loads.

Invest in orchestration

Migrating users between endpoints is a non-trivial exercise, with multiple failure points. Invest in orchestration to ensure that your IT management systems can seamlessly support the new model without needing to increase the headcount of your remote engineering team.

Revisit your third party service contracts to ensure a seamless IT supply chain

Having machines available in the locker is a critical prerequisite to ensuring that your users can pick them up. Revisit your asset management processes to ensure that replenishment orders can seamlessly backfill inventory. Work with your OEM and your field services partner to ensure that they are contractually obligated to maintain accurate asset inventory.

Simplify the user experience

Doing the above five steps does not ensure success if your end users still need to punch in a 15-digit access code they received on email, or if the nearest digital locker is in another building a mile away. Ensure that you deploy digital lockers in locations that are convenient for end users to access and make sure that you integrate them with existing access control mechanisms like ID cards to simplify the user experience.

Summary

The uptick in user experience as well as the economics of using these solutions is a winner and can lower the TCO of endpoint management by over 70%, enabling enterprises to focus on improving and maintaining the applications that are the real heartbeat of an organization. It is a great way to ensure that the lights in an organization do not suddenly dim.

Going beyond digital lockers and vending machines

While the value proposition of digital lockers and vending machines is compelling, far more innovative models are currently being developed that are poised to disrupt the existing service landscape. Chief amongst these is the VR (virtual reality) kiosk, which provides collaboration and problem resolution capabilities to engineers and end users using remote conferencing and VR interfaces, thereby providing all the advantages of a genius bar, but at hyper-scale and at a fraction of the cost. The world of end user computing is poised to undergo an interesting change fostering employee productivity and significant cost savings

About the author

Ramesh Ananthakrisnan
Product Head, Wipro Live Workspace™

Ramesh has more than 12 years of experience in developing and deploying the digital workplace to multiple Fortune 100 and 500 customers. He is responsible for the go-to-market for the digital workplace and AI and NLP as it applies to end user services.

To know more, reach out to **marketing.gis@wipro.com**

Wipro Limited
Doddakannelli, Sarjapur Road,
Bangalore-560 035,
India

Tel: +91 (80) 2844 0011
Fax: +91 (80) 2844 0256
wipro.com

Wipro Limited (NYSE: WIT, BSE: 507685, NSE: WIPRO) is a leading global information technology, consulting and business process services company. We harness the power of cognitive computing, hyper-automation, robotics, cloud, analytics and emerging technologies to help our clients adapt to the digital world and make them successful. A company recognized globally for its comprehensive portfolio of services, strong commitment to sustainability and good corporate citizenship, we have over 160,000 dedicated employees serving clients across six continents. Together, we discover ideas and connect the dots to build a better and a bold new future.

For more information, please write to us at **info@wipro.com**