Case Study

Ballarat Health Services enhances patient and practitioner experience

Ballarat Health Services is a regional health centre serving the Grampians region in Victoria, Australia.

The organisation saw opportunities to optimise operations with greater digital integration, and in particular an opportunity to enhance security around patient data and medical record access, whilst at the same time, enabling staff to deliver efficient and effective patient-centred care.

Ballarat Health Services

Industry: Healthcare
Location: Ballarat, Australia

www.bhs.org.au

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CHALLENGE

The healthcare industry is replete with sensitive data that covers personal patient information, medical records and operational processes. Like other health providers, the increasing integration of technology and systems into clinical workflows provides a challenge for Ballarat Health Services. This integration is required to be 'non-obtrusive', particularly in terms of delaying or complicating life for clinicians.

The viability of the current approach taken by many organisations, including Ballarat Health Services of using generic accounts and leaving computer systems "open" increasingly has privacy, compliance, security, and governance implications.

Before engaging with technology expert and VMware enterprise partner globalone, Ballarat Health Services used a hybrid combination of analogue paper and digital records, to store and disseminate information amongst its clinical staff.

"Our acute based ward hospital was built in the early 90s, and it wasn't designed with the digital evolution in mind," explains Kate Nolan, Chief Information Officer for Ballarat Health Services.

"In the last decade we've moved towards reforming our systems, but we still faced challenges like having a team of thirty people logging onto one computer at the nurse's station. Shared accounts, generic IDs and emails being left logged on were some of the problems we faced."

Existing case studies suggest that more stand-alone complex authentication for multiple applications would result in an additional 30-45 minutes spent per staff member, per shift. It would also result in an added strain on the IT help desk as users waste time recovering passwords, and potentially seeking workarounds to document their passwords credentials in less secure ways.

The use of generic staff IDs, coupled with aging infrastructure, were a security, compliance & data privacy risk for the healthcare provider, and this approach was also hindering the mobility of clinicians, who preferred to deliver care at the patient's bedside. Seeking a new system that could provide improved levels of security and greater mobility for staff, Ballarat Health Services partnered with globalone to devise a solution that would:

- Allow seamless accessibility and storage of data via an ID-based 'tap-on, tap-off' system
- Deliver higher levels of security for all data, using VMware based virtual storage solutions
- Increase the mobility and efficiency of staff by allowing them to access their virtual desktops based on identity credentials, across multiple mobile devices at the patient's bedside
- Be cost-effective and scalable in the long term, as well as adaptable to the workflows or needs of any department

With staff logging in as often as seventy times a day on average, operating on the status quo was no longer viable. Jarrod explains, "large amounts of time were wasted by Clinicians logging in, which resulted in time away from patients. Further, retrieving and resetting forgotten usernames and passwords was not an efficient use of their time, so we had to find a solution that was fast, simple and secure."

"In today's age of cybersecurity, we could no longer afford to have anyone turn on a PC and access information that they shouldn't be privy to."

Jarrod King,
IT Project Lead, Ballarat Health Services

SOLUTION

To tackle these challenges, globalone and Ballarat Health Services subsequently embarked on the Follow Me Desktop Project, which included design and planning, TCO analysis & a pilot of the solution before going live in 2017.

The solution included:

VMware Horizon Desktop Virtualisation

- VMware VSAN HCI
- Imprivata One Sign Enterprise Single sign -on
- Dell EMC Converged Infrastructure and Networking
- Dell EMC Wyse Thin Clients

Now hospital staff are able to use their IDs to tap-on and tap-off at any connected work terminal or laptop around the hospital, obtaining instant access to any prior workspaces or required timely clinical information without needing to juggle multiple login details or navigate through the network to locate the required information.

“The client wanted a solution that was seamless and aligned to their clinical workflow, which is fast-paced and urgent,” says John Kara, Director of globalone. “It also needed to have long-term sustainability in terms of management, support and costs.”

The result was the Follow Me desktop that provides secure and quick access to clinical data and applications on any terminal throughout the hospital with a single tap of their ID card

“VMware’s Horizon Desktop Virtualisation solution presents a standard Windows 10 Desktop to our staff,” says Jarrod King. “It’s simple and easy to use. Our staff don’t need to take additional time off for training, because the interface is presented within a familiar PC environment – except that it’s one with a much higher functionality and security.”

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OUTCOME

The first department to trial the Follow Me Desktop VDI environment was Ballarat Health's Emergency Department, a high-traffic unit with 60,000 attendances a year. At any one point, up to 250 staff from multiple departments are working around the clock in this unit. "Time is always of the essence in an emergency, and we're seeing the benefits of this tap-on tap-off system that gives staff individual logins to quickly access files and move around computers without losing their last session," says Pauline Chapman, Director of Emergency at Ballarat Health Services.

The clinician mobility and instant access to information has led to an improved hospital experience for all. Originally, Ballarat's Health's Emergency Department was seeing initial login wait times to some of their applications of up to a few minutes, whereas now each staff member is able to access all information within seconds.

As well as lowering administration costs for Ballarat Health in the long run, patient confidentiality is also no longer at risk. The new system automatically logs itself off after an idle period, maintaining security and protecting sensitive data from the public eye. Staff accountability is another added benefit, as staff login data is fully logged and tracked, providing a full view on network access attempts, as well as full visibility on staff movements and actions.

The system is working so well that it has now become competitive to attain a VDI card at Ballarat Health Services, with staff from other units keen to adopt the same framework.

"When someone asks me why we don't have the same technology in their departments, that's when I know the system is adding real value. Ground staff are the end users whose daily workflows will be greatly improved while patients are the ones who will get the quality care they deserve."

Kate Nolan

The future looks bright indeed, as a further rollout to all areas of the hospital is underway, as well as potential plans to provide remote & BYOD access to enhance clinical outcomes. "globalone & VMware have been critical success factors in enabling the technology that we've rolled out, and we're confident that they can continue to deliver solutions that will meet the different requirements throughout Ballarat Health Services," says Kate Nolan.

"As we continue to introduce innovative technology that enables our workforce to efficiently and effectively achieve their roles, we have no doubts on the ability of globalone and VMware to support even greater demand for the years ahead."