



Grange Insurance employs AppSense to increase user count by 100% and roll out resource intensive custom applications



“We could have added three Citrix servers to the farm - instead, for a third of the cost, we implemented AppSense Performance Manager and doubled our user count per box”

Adam Wilson
Citrix Administrator,

Open Systems Area and Emerging Technologies for Grange Insurance



INTRODUCTION

Grange Insurance is \$1 billion-plus insurance company headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. Founded in 1935 to provide low-cost auto insurance for rural customers, Grange has grown into a multi-line company offering auto, home, life, business and farm coverage through a network of independent insurance agents in Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. In 2001, Grange affiliated with Integrity Insurance, based in Appleton, Wisc., to expand its geographic footprint into Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa.

BACKGROUND CHALLENGES

Since affiliating with Integrity Insurance, Grange has been assessing ways to streamline workflows between the two companies. While continuing to operate as separate entities, the two organizations share a great deal of information throughout the lifecycle of a particular policy or claim. Applications used by both organizations are incredibly memory intensive and working out a way to streamline the systems in a way that facilitated access from both companies was proving costly.

Adam Wilson, Citrix Administrator, Open Systems Area and Emerging Technologies for Grange Insurance, explained.

“We run our policy and claim handling applications in a Citrix environment to minimize processing requirements at the desktop,” he said. “We wanted to roll out the applications to our affiliate, Integrity Insurance, but that would require adding three extra Citrix servers to the farm because of the nature of the applications they would be running - quite a heavy load and, therefore, a considerable expense.”

Grange Insurance was already running 15 Citrix servers and wanted to see if there was any way to avoid adding three more.

“Three more servers would do the job, but we thought there must be an easier, less expensive and time consuming way,” said Wilson. “One of our team members had previously used AppSense to manage server performance in a terminal server environment and mentioned that AppSense had enabled them to squeeze more onto the servers they had without impacting the performance of the applications. It sounded like it might do exactly what we wanted: That is, enable us to consolidate some of these servers to get more bang for our buck.”

THE INTRODUCTION OF APPSENSE

Wilson contacted AppSense, which worked with the team at Grange to conduct a quick analysis of the company's IT environment. Initial tests showed that Grange would be able to double the number of users on each server simply with the help of AppSense Performance Manager.

Challenge

- > Share business critical applications with affiliate
- > Manage resource consumption of memory intensive applications
- > Reduce requirement to purchase, configure and support additional Citrix servers

Solution

- > AppSense Performance Manager

Benefits

- > 50% reduction in server utilization
- > \$20,000 savings in IT infrastructure

“I was amazed by how much we saved. We were looking at spending around \$30,000 on hardware, storage and support to roll out an additional three Citrix servers. For probably about a third of that we implemented AppSense Performance Manager. Even our most resource intensive applications can fit double the number of users on each Citrix server - which is a 100% improvement on server utilization too.”

Adam Wilson,
Citrix Administrator, Open Systems Area and Emerging Technologies for Grange Insurance

Initial testing provided clear results very quickly.

“We could either buy new Citrix servers and spend time configuring them all,” said Wilson. “Or we could consolidate the existing ones to accommodate the additional users in a quarter of the time using AppSense Performance Manager. The decision was readily apparent.”

AppSense Performance Manager optimizes application and user environments to ensure maximum hardware utilization with an optimal, consistent quality of service. Using AppSense Performance Manager, Grange Insurance was able to limit the resources available to the critical memory intensive applications, ensuring consistent capacity for every user on the server.

When assessing the results, Wilson remarked

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“Not only do we have more users than ever on our existing hardware, but we have not had to compromise or restrict any of the Citrix applications. Most importantly - the AppSense solution was so easy to implement. We thought it would take over a week but in the end we rolled this application out to our affiliate insurance company in half a day!”

Grange Insurance has big plans for the future and Wilson is anticipating that AppSense will continue to play a part in that.

“We are looking to create a VDI environment in the near future. I am currently conducting research into virtual desktops and whether or not VDI makes sense in our business. If we decide to virtualize, we will definitely look to AppSense again.”

NETWORK ENVIRONMENT

- > 15 Citrix servers.
- > Two specialized resource-intensive insurance applications

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