

Success Story: The City of Oklahoma City



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Shamra Noakes
Client Infrastructure Manager
The City of Oklahoma City

Customer Profile: The City of Oklahoma City is a local government organization providing essential services such as public safety, police and fire to a population of more than a half million people.

Challenge: The City of Oklahoma City's IT department needed to quickly and effectively migrate applications to Microsoft® Windows 7 and implement Microsoft Application Virtualization (App-V™).

Solution: The City of Oklahoma City chose AdminStudio to automate application readiness for application migrations.

Benefits: Saved time and reduced costs to prepare applications for migration. Packaging time was cut from 50 man hours to two – more than a 95% reduction in man hours per application. This translates roughly to \$1,300 savings in staff time for each application, and \$97,000 for their entire Windows 7 Migration. AdminStudio also automated the process to convert applications to the App-V format.



In these difficult economic times, organizations across the board are finding they have to do more with less – less people, time and resources. State and local governments – dependent upon dwindling tax bases to fund operations – are in an even more precarious position as they are faced with a declining ability to deliver essential government services.

The City of Oklahoma City, with a population of more than a half million people, is no exception. With more than 4,000 employees, its IT department of about 80 employees has seen significant cuts over the past two years, and they must make due managing the IT resources of such diverse and essential services as public safety, police and fire, wired and wireless networks and more.

Of course, significant productivity and efficiency benefits can come from leveraging the latest technologies, such as

Microsoft's Windows 7™ operating system or application virtualization. The challenge for governments and organizations alike, however, is mustering the necessary resources to cost effectively migrate to these technologies – or to put it more succinctly, how to get there from here?

Undertaking Windows 7 Migration

The challenge was daunting. The city has more than 3,000 desktops running approximately 75 IT-supported applications. According to the City's client infrastructure manager, Shamra Noakes, in order to take advantage of Windows 7 and Microsoft Application Virtualization™ (App-V), for each application IT would have had to undertake a significant effort to analyze, package and deliver the application to the users' desktops – a highly manual process. "We had lot of personnel cuts last year, so we no longer have resources to send people out to troubleshoot machines. We needed a way to be able to switch out a machine and have users up and running within an hour or two."

The traditional process of application packaging entails six essential steps:

1. Identifying the media
2. Repackaging/Conversion
3. Editing
4. Conflict Analysis
5. Testing
6. Deployment

Noakes says manually packaging the City's applications for the Windows migration would have overrun her team's resources. "One of the goals for our Windows 7 rollout was to make it transparent and seamless to the user, using as few IT resources as possible."

However, in actuality the process was laborious, and involved creating transforms, or "fixing", the application, testing, editing and final packaging. "We knew we were going to have to package the applications – but we didn't have the manpower to do it all manually.

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All told, the whole process could take us two to three weeks per application." With 75 applications to package, that would have commandeered all the resources for her lean-to-the bone, two-person staff for the foreseeable future.

"We want to get Windows 7 rolled out by April of next year, which would have been unfeasible. Honestly, we needed a tool that would do it for us automatically."

Automating Application Packaging Delivers ROI

Like so many other IT Departments facing can't-miss deadlines with fewer resources, Noakes' team needed an automated solution to centrally prepare and deploy applications in a reliable, consistent way. A quick Google® search turned up AdminStudio™ from Flexera Software as one of the leading application readiness solutions on the market. Noakes liked what she saw and scheduled a meeting with a sales representative. "AdminStudio did everything we needed – it integrated with Microsoft® System Center Configuration Manager® and converts to App-V, which was nice because that's our infrastructure. We bought it within a week." Noakes and her team took advantage of an available training course to become immediately productive.

AdminStudio's ability to run automated tests on MSIs, identify Windows 7-related problems, and fix errors automatically, was key in helping Noakes' team package the City's applications for Windows 7. The system's ability to Test for Windows 7 Compatibility was also important for streamlining the process, "We ran this on several of our applications that would not even install on Windows 7 and the auto-resolve fixed most of these issues with the click of a button."

The team was also impressed by AdminStudio's ability to create Response Transforms. "It makes it easy to push out applications that require non-standard installations through our SCCM environment. I also like that the product is integrated with the InstallShield editor. This

lets me open up and view other MSI's to help me determine how the application is installed, so I can plan or troubleshoot the installation or uninstallation of applications."

Other features also helped the IT team streamline the packaging process by letting them quickly migrate software to MSI, edit for package customization, do conflict testing and resolution, and automatically correct package validation and QA issues. "AdminStudio comes along and it has the Microsoft® Windows Installer® [MSI editor]," said Noakes. "So now we pop the MSI editor in and follow the prompts. Within 30 minutes we have the transform file that you can package with Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager – and you're done. It also lets you edit the table to make a silent install without having to go back in and try this command or that one, like we used to. AdminStudio does it all for you. It's like having an additional headcount that does nothing but application packaging – cheaply."

Noakes says that with AdminStudio's help, her two-person team is well ahead of the department's scheduled Windows 7 migration targets. But perhaps most impressive is the time and cost-savings they've achieved since implementing the product. "We installed AdminStudio and started using it right away. It used to take us about 50 man hours to package and ready an application. Now it takes about two – more than a 95% reduction in man hours per application. This translates roughly to \$1,300 savings in staff time for just one application, and \$97,000 for our whole Windows 7 Migration!"

Of course, Noakes points out that AdminStudio delivers value beyond large projects like Windows 7 migration – but also helps contain costs for their day-to-day application packaging needs. "We get called upon to repackage one to two applications per month – and we use AdminStudio for all our repackaging needs. That amounts to about \$2,600 per month in ongoing savings. It's part

of our long-term infrastructure, and lets us turn around application requests right when they come in the door without wasting weeks and months to make sure everything's going to work right. With this tool in place, we've moved from a reactive, project oriented approach, to a proactive holistic approach resulting in continuous application readiness.

Simplifying Application Virtualization

Like many organizations, City of Oklahoma City sees application virtualization as a way to lower computing and application management costs and become more nimble. However, preparing and converting applications for virtualization can be a daunting task in and of itself.

The City of Oklahoma City, like many organizations, thought their Windows 7 migration project would be a good catalyst to jumpstart their application virtualization efforts. However, they soon discovered the significant time and costs associated with manual application virtualization projects. "Before AdminStudio, once we'd have an application packaged and get all the commands to work properly, we'd have to go back in and do manual sequencing to see if it would even work with App-V," recalled Noakes. "It would take an additional three weeks to a month of someone's time just to determine if an application was App-V-compatible." Noakes pointed out that because only about 60 percent of the City's applications could be virtualized, a significant amount of staff time was wasted doing manual analysis on applications that, it might turn out, could not even be packaged for App-V.

AdminStudio's ability to automate conversion to the App-V format, therefore, presented compelling additional value. "The system compressed both Windows 7 packaging and application virtualization into a single, automated process," said Noakes. "

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Noakes says that her department simply could not have made the progress it has on virtualization without the tool. "We wouldn't have had the time to go back and determine if the application was a candidate for App-V without AdminStudio. The fact is, we would have barely had the resources to package the application and move on. AdminStudio, on the other hand, does all the conversion for you. You don't have to go to another virtual machine and reinstall the application."

A Win-Win for the Organization, and the IT Team

The City of Oklahoma's investment in AdminStudio is paying off in expected, and unanticipated ways. Clearly saving time and money was the impetus for purchasing the product – and in that respect, it has more than paid for itself in only a short time. "I would highly recommend AdminStudio. It is inexpensive, and yet it allowed us to save the equivalent of two employees."

And that win has translated to a different type of payoff – recognition by management for a job well done. "We wouldn't be nearly so far in our Windows 7 rollout or application virtualization efforts without AdminStudio," said Noakes. "And management has noticed. We've gotten great comments on our cost-cutting creativity and improved application packaging turnaround times."

About Flexera Software

Flexera Software is the leading provider of strategic solutions for Application Usage Management; solutions delivering continuous compliance, optimized usage and maximized value to application producers and their customers. Flexera Software is trusted by more than 80,000 customers that depend on our comprehensive solutions- from installation and licensing, entitlement and compliance management to application readiness and enterprise license optimization - to strategically manage application usage and achieve breakthrough results realized only through the systems-level approach we provide. For more information, please go to: www.flexerasoftware.com

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Or Contact Us 1-800-809-5659



Flexera Software LLC
1000 East Woodfield Road,
Suite 400
Schaumburg, IL 60173 USA

Schaumburg
(Global Headquarters):
+1 800-809-5659

United Kingdom (Europe,
Middle East Headquarters):
+44 870-871-1111
+44 870-873-6300

Japan (Asia,
Pacific Headquarters):
+81 3-4360-8291

For more office locations visit:
www.flexerasoftware.com