



Customer: AmericanWest Bank
Web Site: www.awbank.net
Customer Size: 600
Country or Region: United States
Industry: Financial services

Customer Profile

Based in Spokane, Washington, AmericanWest Bank offers business and consumer banking services to customers in Washington, Idaho, and Utah. It has 600 employees and 58 branch offices.

Software and Services

- Windows 7 Release Candidate
- Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack
 - Microsoft Enterprise Desktop Virtualization
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager 2007
 - Windows Server 2003
 - Windows Server 2008 Standard
- Microsoft Office

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Regional Bank Streamlines IT Management, Improves System

"We can reduce calls to the help desk by enabling users to troubleshoot on their own. For each call saved, that's an addition 15 minutes our IT personnel can spend on more strategic tasks."

Robert Cardon, Network Administrator, AmericanWest Bank

AmericanWest Bank is a regional business and consumer bank with 58 financial centers in Washington, Idaho, and Utah. As part of its scheduled hardware refresh, the company also wanted to upgrade its operating system from Windows® XP to Windows 7. Although the upgrade is still in the pilot phase, AmericanWest Bank has improved the user experience, improved system performance, and reduced the number of calls to its internal IT help desk.

Business Needs

AmericanWest Bank, a subsidiary of AmericanWest Bancorporation, offers its customers a full complement of business and consumer banking products, including residential lending and private banking. Headquartered in Spokane, Washington, AmericanWest Bank has 58 financial centers in central and eastern

Washington, northern Idaho, and Utah under the brand Far West Bank. The bank has 600 employees.

The company has 600 desktops and portable computers including Thin Clients, all running the Windows® XP Service Pack 3 (SP3) operating system and Microsoft® Office Professional Plus 2007, along with several

core banking applications. Its server environment is composed of the Windows Server® 2003 and the Windows Server 2008 operating systems.

With Windows XP moving from mainstream to the extended support phase of its lifecycle, AmericanWest Bank wanted to explore upgrading its operating system. "When Windows 7 Beta was released," explains Robert Cardon, Network Administrator at AmericanWest Bank, "it was perfect timing. We were planning on refreshing our hardware and that's typically when we upgrade our operating system." The company decided to migrate to Windows 7, using its Microsoft Enterprise Agreement for licensing.

At the same time, the company wanted to take advantage of enhancements built into the operating system that would enable it to streamline computer management. It also looked forward to increased system performance and an improved user experience.

Solution

AmericanWest Bank began its migration to the Windows 7 operating system with a pilot deployment to 12 employees in the company's IT department. Now running Windows 7 Release Candidate, the company expanded its pilot group to

include five power users, including vice presidents of other departments. As part of the migration, AmericanWest Bank will also upgrade to Windows Server 2008 R2.

In accordance with its upgrade policy, the company will continue to add more users to the pilot group as it refreshes its hardware. By the end of June 2010, AmericanWest Bank plans to have 300 computers upgraded to Windows 7, with a full deployment companywide by the end of March 2011.

Because most of its third-party applications are already compatible with the Windows Vista® operating system, and, given the similarity between Windows Vista and Windows 7, AmericanWest Bank does not anticipate any compatibility issues. To help mitigate any compatibility issues that do arise, the company will use Microsoft Enterprise Desktop Virtualization (MED-V), part of the Microsoft Desktop Optimization Pack, to enable users to run a virtual instance of Windows XP on the Windows 7 desktop.

For its pilot deployment, AmericanWest Bank is using a manual process with offline media. To assist with its widespread deployment, the company is evaluating

Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager 2007 and Windows Deployment Services.

The company is implementing User Account Control, and evaluating AppLocker™, BitLocker™ Drive Encryption, and BitLocker To Go™ for enhanced security. For improved information access for remote workers and those who work at branch offices, AmericanWest Bank is evaluating additional Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008 R2 features, including BranchCache™ and DirectAccess.

Benefits

Although still in the pilot phase of its Windows 7 deployment, AmericanWest Bank already benefits from improved user experience, improved system performance, and reduced calls to its help desk.

Improved User Experience

User Account Control enables the operating system to be deployed without administrative privileges extended to users—critical to the banking company that deploys users as standard users. Additionally, User Account Control enhances user experience by reducing the number of applications and tasks that require elevation and by enabling standard

users to do more than before with fewer elevation prompts.

quickly troubleshoot and resolve the problem.

Improved System Performance

Employees at AmericanWest Bank have experienced improved system performance. "Our employees tell us that everything just runs faster—from boot sequence and resume mode from hibernation, to software applications," says Cardon. "We're definitely impressed with the performance."

Reduced Help Desk Calls

With rich, built-in troubleshooting capabilities, end users can more easily resolve more technical issues on their own—without having to call the help desk. "We can reduce calls to the help desk by enabling users to troubleshoot on their own," says Cardon. "For each call saved, that's an addition 15 minutes our IT personnel can spend on more strategic tasks."

If a call to the help desk is unavoidable, IT personnel can more quickly resolve issues for users. For instance, the Problem Steps Recorder feature in Windows 7 allows users to reproduce the technical issue, with each step recorded as a screen shot along with accompanying logs to be sent to the help desk. Instead of taking time to reproduce the issue, the IT staff can