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FLEXAPP™ AS PART OF THE NEW HYBRID WORKSPACE AT THE "WATERSCHAP BRABANTSE DELTA"

> "One of our core values is to 'simplify IT management' and FlexApp fits perfectly with that."
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> **MARTIJN KONINGS**
> Senior System and Network Administrator

The **"Waterschap Brabantse Delta"** is a governmental organization that ensures safe dikes, purifies sewage water, improves and monitors the quality of surface water and regulates water levels. To perform these core tasks, IT is an indispensable link in the chain. Employees who (literally!) have their feet planted in the clay must be able to use a properly functioning mobile workspace, the organization must be accessible and available 24/7, and there is a large range of specialized applications. To optimally facilitate this, the IT department started a project to modernize its digital workspace environment. They chose FlexApp as a prominent part of the new hybrid workplace.

We are talking to Martijn Konings, Senior System and Network Administrator, who is mainly responsible for the design and management of the front-end.

The 'old' environment and its challenges

The Waterschap Brabantse Delta has about 800 workstations: half are physical PCs in the office and the other half is remote Citrix workstations. One of the challenges in the area of application management was the large number of applications (about 300) and the high management burden this entailed. Maintaining all Golden Images, including repackaging applications, was very time-consuming, partly because some of the applications are legacy applications. Because the applications have to be delivered and managed on two different platforms (Citrix for the locations with low bandwidth, and local installation at the head office), this caused additional complexity.

Martijn: "Because there are so many different applications, it is unworkable to install them on all workstations. Therefore, on-demand application delivery was chosen using Sense. However, this presented a challenge for the new cloud-oriented way of working, after which it was decided to deliver the applications from a store with Liquit. (Not to be confused with Liquidware!). Only when an application really depends on a network, is it delivered via Citrix."

The role of FlexApp

FlexApp, Liquidware's application layering solution, will have a prominent role in the new hybrid workspace environment. Employees will be able to work on their own laptops and plug into a flex working space in the office. Workstations that do not have a good network connection, such as small remote locations at a pumping station, will continue to use Citrix because of its optimization for small bandwidths. On both types of workstations (the physical laptops and the Citrix workstations), applications are offered via FlexApp. "The Liquit catalog is the starting point for all users to select applications, after which they refer to various types of applications. For example, some of the applications will be installed locally because of the user experience, some are SaaS and the rest are FlexApp based."

Why FlexApp?

Martijn: "I already knew of Liquidware because of your Github script that I used for packaging. At a trade show I heard the application layering story during your breakout session and that was exactly what we were looking for! We did look at app layering from other vendors, but there we saw several limitations. For example, we couldn't offer applications on-demand, or they all had to be in the Citrix image. That way you get 'image rot' and applications start to conflict with each other. With FlexApp, applications are actually delivered as a separate layer and not 'baked into' somewhere. Moreover, App-V is going to disappear, and we were looking for a platform-independent alternative."

On the eve of the migration

After Waterschap did a Proof of Concept, the collaboration started. "After testing, we saw a great success rate in packaging and decided to move forward with FlexApp. More specifically, this means migrating 300 Sense applications to FlexApp. That means some extra work now, but we expect a big savings in the application management burden later. Even though we have so many applications, some are only used by a handful of employees. The fact that we can now manage these individually, saves a lot of work. For example, when Windows version updates occur, we don't have to repackage, test and troubleshoot all the applications and managing the Citrix image is separate from the managing the applications."

Cooperation and support

Martijn: "Although the cooperation has only just started, we like it very much! One of the benefits is the personal support from Liquidware. With larger suppliers, you always speak to different people, if you get to speak to an actual person at all. Often you have to provide hundreds of log files before someone will look at the problem with you. Liquidware continuously thinks along with us, and if we run into something, a Teams call is scheduled to go through it; this works well. Ultimately, one of our core values is to 'simplify management' and Liquidware and FlexApp fit perfectly with that."