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THINKIOSK

How ThinKiosk Enables Thin Client Computing in Education

WHITE PAPER

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How ThinKiosk Enables Thin Client Computing in Education

Today's challenges in delivering computing in education

Students of today are the employees of tomorrow, and in the consumer driven world in which we live today, this becomes an important factor when it comes to delivering educational services to schools, colleges, and universities. Students, both young and old, will be far more technically savvy than ever before when it comes to working with IT systems, apps and data.

Whether it's classroom-based primary and secondary education, or a more flexible approach to learning within further, higher, or even distance learning-based education, the challenges remain the same. How to deliver an improved end user learning experience while at the same time keeping one eye on the ever-shrinking budgets.

Centralizing desktops and apps, and delivering them remotely

One approach to enhancing learning environments is by deploying some form of virtual desktop or published application-based solution, centralizing computing resources and allowing students to connect from classroom networks as well as from multi-site campuses. This goes a long way in delivering the applications and content required to drive the learning process for the digital education age. But how do students access these remote desktop and application environments without having to purchase new devices? This is where the ThinKiosk software-defined thin clients can solve the device question.

Convert classroom PCs & laptops into thin clients

By turning your current Windows-based classroom devices, whether they are PCs, laptops, or even existing thin clients, into ThinKiosk software-defined thin clients will save you time and money. You no longer need to spend limited budgets on unnecessary hardware purchases, and instead you can utilize the hardware you already have deployed and turn them into secure, locked-down thin clients. As deployment and management is all driven from a central location, you also reduce the time required for classroom visits and keep student disruption to a minimum .

Existing Windows devices are simply repurposed, without the need to rebuild devices, install a dual-boot environment, or boot from an external USB device. As ThinKiosk is a Windows-based solution admins can also continue using current deployment methods such as Microsoft SCCM for example.

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Convert classroom PCs & laptops into thin clients

Deliver flexible, secure, low-cost thin client computing environments

ThinKiosk is a software-only solution that repurposes existing Windows-based hardware, either PC, laptop, tablet, or even thin clients into secure, centrally managed, Windows-based thin clients, delivering a familiar look and feel for students and teaching staff alike.

As ThinKiosk is a Windows–based solution, it ensures that hardware compatibility is maintained with external educational peripherals, such as smart whiteboards. That also means you can install apps locally and continue teaching even if the network and remote session should become unavailable.

For IT admins, converting existing Windows devices into Windows-based thin clients adds enhanced management capabilities such as ensuring devices are up to date and patched to meet security compliance, or advanced security features to protect the environment from malware. With a host of remote support features, ThinKiosk also reduces the time spent supporting the devices across the campus.

SOFTWARE-DEFINED

ThinKiosk software-defined thin clients turn your existing Windows devices into thin clients without overwriting them, dual booting, or booting from USB.

SECURE WORKSPACE ENVIRONMENT

ThinKiosk locks down the underlying device OS, replacing it with a Windows-style, intuitive, secure workspace, allowing students to access learning resources.

FAST & SIMPLE DEPLOYMENT

ThinKiosk is Windows-based and is easily deployed to existing devices, turning them into managed, secure thin clients in a matter of minutes. No need for rebooting or dual-booting.

LOWER COSTS

Educational establishments can utilize hardware they already own, so with a ThinKiosk solution the cost is purely for the software license, as there is no need to purchase new thin client devices.

FAMILIAR END USER EXPERIENCE

The key to any successful solution is giving students something they are used to already using. ThinKiosk provides a seamless transition to remote solutions, coupled with a familiar, customizable UI.

CENTRALIZED MANAGEMENT

The secure workspace environment is managed centrally using the ThinScale Management Platform, allowing IT admins to ensure that the environment is configured securely, and up to date.

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ThinKiosk for Education Features

Secure existing classroom devices with full lock-down

Booting up a repurposed classroom device denies students from having access to the underlying Windows operating system of the device, rendering it disabled, preventing them from accessing any device settings, ensuring it remains secure

Instead of the usual desktop interface of the Windows OS, they will access a secure workspace environment, a simple, easy to navigate user interface from where they can connect to their remote environments securely. They also have the ability to access local applications if they have the relevant permission from IT to do so, allowing seamless migration to a remote desktop or published application environment by enabling legacy educational applications to be used.

Block students from plugging in USB devices

USB devices are often seen as one of the main causes of security breaches and data leakage, especially within a classroom environment. Students could plug in their own USB memory sticks and other write-enabled media devices and copy data onto them and remove from the classroom environment.

With ThinKiosk's configurable USB blocking feature, students are prevented from having access to these devices stopping them from introducing potentially unsafe files and other viruses and malware onto the educational establishments network. This ensures that other students remain secure and protected.

Prevent unauthorized applications from running

The Application Execution Prevention (AEP) feature adds an additional layer of security by preventing students from running unauthorized applications.

Employing a rules-based system, IT admins can now configure exactly which apps students are allowed launch on their ThinKiosk thin clients. These rules allow IT admins to create white/black lists which contain a comprehensive list of rule types that delivers a granular level of control over exactly which applications can and can't run. IT admins can create generic rule sets that allow all Windows OS binaries to run, or they can create a more targeted rule set that allows only those applications signed by a specific digital certificate to launch and run.

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ThinKiosk for Education Features

Prevent malicious services from running

The Service Execution Prevention feature of ThinKiosk allows you to control which Windows services are allowed to run on the repurposed devices operating system. If a service is running and it does not match the defined policies, then the service will be automatically stopped. This also applies to any services that have been configured with a delayed startup, ensuring security is maintained.

Ensure devices are always up to date

ThinKiosk enables IT departments to easily control the Windows Update feature to ensure that end users are running the correct patches an updates before connecting to the network and accessing their desktops and applications.

For IT this means they can configure how often the client devices check for any updates, and then decide when, and if to apply them. End users can also be prompted to install any of the available updates, or the updates can simply be pre-configured by the IT department to install silently, without user intervention or disruption. This ensures that the end users' devices are always up to date, secure, and compliant.

Securing the network

Another security feature of ThinKiosk enables IT admins to fully configure the Windows Firewall feature automatically. They can remove any existing firewall rules, or configure new firewall rules, and manage this centrally all from the ThinScale Management Platform and the Profile Editor.

Enhancing the student learning experience

The end user experience for students is key to the learning experience and the speed of accessing learning environments. ThinKiosk enhances the user experience by delivering a familiar Windows look and feel coupled with an intuitive secure workspace user interface that enable fast and easy access to virtual desktop and published application environments. It also allows students and teaching staff to have access to locally installed applications (based on admin set policy) should they need to work offline.

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ThinKiosk for Education Features

Delivering legacy & modern educational apps

Legacy applications still play a huge part in today's educational environments, although in reality there is nothing legacy about them and they are still relevant, and very much in use. However, not all of these apps can be delivered remotely or published. Also they may not be supported using virtual infrastructure, so how do you embrace the old and move to the new simultaneously?

With ThinKiosk being a Windows-based solution, you have the ability to install and securely access applications locally on PCs and laptops, as well as being able to update them, and all while maintaining central management and control using ThinKiosk policy templates to ensure security.

Being locally installed also means that applications can run regardless of whether an end user can connect to a network to access remote systems. The device will remain usable, even when offline, meaning it doesn't disrupt the learning experience for the students or teaching staff,

End user experience – Delivering a familiar look & feel

As part of the overall enhanced end user experience, ThinKiosk employs a unique feature called Magic Filter. Magic Filter is a dynamic key press pass-through feature that traps local keystrokes such as Ctrl + Alt + Del and Windows + L, and passes them directly through to the remote environment, just as if the user was working locally on their device.

This unique feature delivers an enhanced end user experience as the students have a native Windows feel when using their ThinKiosk thin client.

Compatibility with classroom peripherals

Maintaining compatibility with existing Windows-based hardware is a core requirement within education. Often Linux-based thin client alternatives are unable to connect with existing peripherals such as smart whiteboards, printers, and other educational type peripherals.

Using existing Windows-based devices and repurposing them as ThinKiosk Windows-based software-defined thin clients ensures that hardware compatibility is maintained, appropriate device drivers are still available, and therefore guaranteeing device operation and compatibility.

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ThinKiosk for Education Features

Managing and securing student web browsing

Included as part of the ThinKiosk Client software, is an integrated web browser, complete with a fully customizable user interface, that allows users to securely browse Internet sites based on policy set by the IT department.

The ThinKiosk browser is fully compatible with websites as it utilizes the browser rendering engine used in Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Centralized management, updating, and support

ThinScale's Management Platform provides centralized configuration and management of all your ThinKiosk thin clients, ensuring devices are up to date and running the latest configurations, policies, profiles, and third-party software such as the remote connection client software.

The Management Platform also includes role based admin access, allowing delegation of tasks to different admin users in different departments or on a different campus.

ThinKiosk Use Cases for Education

Seamless migration

Move to VDI & published apps

Ensure a smooth and seamless migration to virtual desktop and published app environments with no disruption to students and teaching staff.

ThinKiosk offers students and staff a familiar workspace environment with a Windows look and feel, giving the users that comfortable feeling when moving from a physical desktop environment to a virtual environment. This not only increase their learning productivity but also lowers the support overheads.

Extend device lifecycles

No need to purchase new devices

Converting existing classroom devices into ThinKiosk thin clients mean you no longer have to replace your current devices as part of your migration to virtual desktop and published app solutions. Simply convert the existing devices and extend their usable life.

Devices can then be replaced as and when, using cheaper alternatives and turn them into ThinKiosk thin clients complete with security and centralized management as standard.

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What is ThinKiosk ?

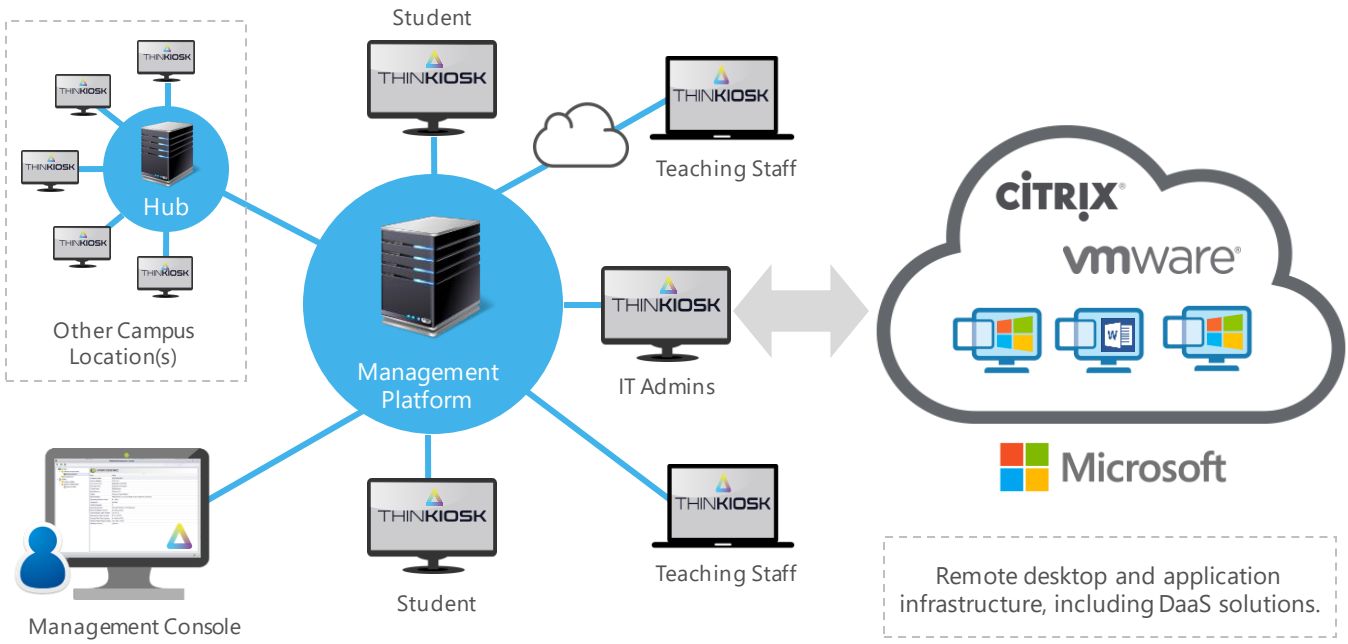
ThinKiosk is a software-defined thin client solution that repurposes existing Windows PC or laptops, and existing Windows-based thin client into centrally managed, secure thin clients. Students and teaching staff are presented with a secure workspace environment from where they can launch virtual desktops and apps from.

How does ThinKiosk work?

ThinKiosk is a Windows-based, software defined, highly scalable PC to thin client conversion solution that installs onto an existing Windows-based device, turning it into a locked-down Windows-based thin client.

By converting existing devices into thin clients, extends the life of your existing hardware and provides a cost-effective alternative to hardware based thin clients. It also delivers a fully managed, secure thin client environment reducing support costs and helpdesk calls.

Form an end user's perspective they are presented with a unified end user experience With its lightweight intuitive user interface, ThinKiosk provides students and teaching staff with a secure workspace from where they can access their remote and local desktop and application environments from, either on or off campus.



Architecture-wise, Hub Servers can be deployed in remote campus locations to manage their own locally deployed ThinKiosk thin clients, acting as software deployment points, and reducing the amount of data sent between campus locations when deploying software packages, updates, and policies to the clients.

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ThinKiosk for Education Summary

ThinKiosk is a Windows-based, software defined, scalable PC to thin client conversion solution that delivers a unified end user experience on all converted end points. It turns your existing Windows PCs into secure, centrally managed Windows-based thin clients, dramatically reducing hardware and management costs, while also improving student learning experience.

With its lightweight intuitive user interface, ThinKiosk provides students and teaching staff with a secure workspace from where they can access their remote and local desktop and application environments from.

Windows-based thin clients

Take full advantage of all the features and benefits that using Windows-based thin client devices deliver. If it works on Windows, then it will work with ThinKiosk thin clients.

Policy & profile driven

IT administrators can configure profiles defining how a ThinKiosk thin client behaves. The profiles define settings from appearance settings, through to security settings.

Familiar end user experience

ThinKiosk thin clients deliver a familiar and intuitive secure user interface, with a Windows look & feel, along with enhanced productivity features.

Speed up end user onboarding

Installation takes minutes and is as simple as deploying the ThinScale Management Platform and the ThinKiosk Client on your endpoints. No need to boot from USB, or dual boot devices.

Multi-display support

ThinKiosk supports the same number of displays that are supported by the end point device, and the underlying Windows operating system, and has its own display control applet.

Secure workspace environment

ThinKiosk locks down the underlying operating system of the device and in its place delivers end users a secure workspace environment from where they can access apps and services from.

Centralized management

Manage you entire converted thin client device estate using a single management platform with a single pane of glass administration console.

Reduce cost, increase productivity

ThinKiosk thin clients enables educational organizations to reduce the cost of hardware acquisition, management, increases end user productivity with faster onboarding and easier support.

For more details on features and benefits of converting your classroom PCs into Windows-based, software defined ThinKiosk thin clients, how they work, how they fit into your learning environment, and how ThinKiosk solves many of the use case issues faced in education today, please visit the ThinScale website, or contact the ThinScale team to discuss your use case.

THINSCALE

Software solutions that enable IT to deliver the modern digital workplace without compromising on end user experience, security or performance.

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