



Windows Vista Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: CDW

Web Site: www.cdw.com

Customer Size: 6,300 employees

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Information technology

Customer Profile

CDW is a U.S.\$8.1 billion technology-solutions company that was founded in 1984 and today employs 6,300 people. Its Microsoft Practice employs 125 people.

Software and Services

- Windows Vista Enterprise
- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Windows Server 2008
 - Microsoft Exchange Server 2007
 - Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager 2007

For more information about other Microsoft customer successes, please visit: www.microsoft.com/casestudies

Technology Professionals Enjoy Productivity, Enhanced Security with System Upgrade

“Our deployment of Windows Vista was one of the easiest such projects we have ever undertaken.”

Jaime Waterfield, Solutions Manager, Microsoft Practice, CDW

As a highly successful system integrator and solution provider to organizations of all sizes, CDW practices what it preaches by ensuring that its own technology professionals have the most advanced software available on their desktop and portable computers. To that end, CDW has deployed Windows Vista® to the 125 employees in its Microsoft Practice, all of them mobile. As a result, those employees are enjoying significant improvements in productivity and security.

Business Needs

Named by Fortune magazine in 2008 as one of America's Most Admired Companies, Vernon Hills, Illinois-based CDW is a leading provider of technology solutions for business, government, and education. With an employee base of 6,300, CDW serves customers across the United States, offering expertise in the areas of unified communications, security, remote managed services, virtualization, and desktop optimization.

The CDW Microsoft Practice consists of more than 125 professionals, who use a broad selection of Microsoft® server and client technologies. Like their counterparts throughout the larger CDW enterprise,

Microsoft Practice managers are committed to running their own business on solutions that are as innovative as those they provide to customers. By using such solutions internally, the CDW Microsoft Practice can demonstrate its technology leadership, and its employees can speak from experience when recommending and implementing those solutions for customers.

Solution

Because of its longtime commitment to using Microsoft technologies and its need for advanced productivity, security, and mobility at the client level, members of the CDW Microsoft Practice became enthusiastic participants in the Microsoft Technology



Adoption Program for the Windows Vista® operating system. After the software's formal release in January 2007, the group began a measured deployment to the engineers, consultants, and sales specialists who sell, design, develop, integrate, and implement the solutions that the CDW Microsoft Practice provides to its customers.

As Jaime Waterfield, Solutions Manager in the Microsoft Practice at CDW, explains, these employees constituted an ideal deployment target because their needs align closely with the security and mobility capabilities of Windows Vista. All 125 of these individuals are in transit virtually 365 days a year to service customers on-site in the planning, deploying, and support of advanced software solutions.

To streamline deployment, Waterfield's team used the Microsoft Key Management Service for Windows Server® 2008, Microsoft Deployment Toolkit 2008, and Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager 2007. The team also used the Microsoft Application Compatibility Toolkit version 5.0, Windows® User State Migration Tool, ImageX, and Windows Imaging Format. The team completed deployment in mid-2007.

Benefits

The CDW Microsoft Practice is enjoying a number of benefits as a result of this deployment, including higher productivity, enhanced security, simplified reinstallations, and a far more cost-effective process for future deployments.

- **Day-to-day productivity improvements.** With the help of Windows Vista Instant Search, metatags, and search folders, the employees of CDW Microsoft Practice are integrating the search functionalities of Windows Vista, Microsoft Exchange Server

2007, and Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007. "As a result, users are organizing and finding information far more easily than ever before," Waterfield reports. "This represents a significant advantage, considering the voluminous data involved in implementing the kind of complex IT solutions that these professionals provide to customers."

- **Stronger security in the field.** The mobile workers in the CDW Microsoft Practice have long needed powerful security technologies that do not interfere with getting work done. Today, these workers are using Windows Vista security capabilities such as Windows BitLocker™ Drive Encryption, Windows Firewall, and Windows Defender to help them maintain system stability in their portable computers and to protect vital customer data often stored on them.

The same mobile workers frequently need to access the larger CDW network as well as internal customer networks wirelessly. To do this, they are taking advantage of the integrated wireless client that is part of the Windows Vista Network and Sharing Center. This client supports settings management through the Active Directory® service in the Windows Server operating system.

"Through the integrated wireless client in Windows Vista, Microsoft Practice consultants can access corporate networks with greater security, which boosts the confidence of our customers," Waterfield says. "This is highly valuable, as establishing a strong relationship is central to building and maintaining a loyal customer base."

- **Easier reinstallations.** Another common challenge for the mobile workers of the CDW Microsoft Practice is the need to

reinstall the operating system on their portable or Tablet PC after they have used it for demonstrating or testing customer solutions. In the past, such a reinstallation required an authentication product key, which sometimes took the mobile worker several hours to obtain. Because Windows Vista supports the Key Management Service for Windows Server 2008, the worker can expedite reinstallation by connecting to the Microsoft network and activating on the spot.

- **Deployment cost savings.** Waterfield and other managers in the CDW Microsoft Practice look forward to potential cost savings from streamlining deployment with tools such as ImageX and Windows Imaging Format. With such tools, the CDW Microsoft Practice anticipates being able to rely on a single deployment image—instead of 10 or 15, as the group did before—to bring Windows Vista and future operating system updates to the employees who need them.

"This means that a consultant can be up and running in a matter of minutes, rather than having to wait for a period that in some cases could take days," Waterfield explains. "In turn, the consultant can start work on billable projects right away."

Waterfield also is pleased at the efficiency of her team's own deployment experience. "Our deployment of Windows Vista was one of the easiest such projects we have ever undertaken," she says.