



Case Study: City of Kenosha



City of Kenosha: Realizing the Power of Thin-Client Computing

As of 2003, the City of Kenosha supported 250 users on an annual budget of \$500/user, which provides hardware, software, network, and IT support.

Kenosha has totally embraced thin-client computing for its centralized administration benefits and low cost per user. CrossOver Linux Pro fits in perfectly with this strategic direction.

Overview: With the help of CodeWeavers' CrossOver Linux Pro, the City of Kenosha is realizing both significant cost savings and convenience benefits.

Kenosha is a city of 80,000 located on the shores of Lake Michigan in southeastern Wisconsin. Its city government (<http://www.kenosha.org/>) supports a staff of 250 computer users, with the majority (200) being located centrally at City Hall. The remainder are distributed remotely (usually within city limits) and connect to work via ADSL.

Like many municipal governments, Kenosha is currently facing fiscal difficulties in a period of slash-and-burn budgets. As a result, the city is looking for every means available for economizing when it comes to desktop application support for its workers. The city's IT budget allocates a mere \$500/user annually, which must encompass hardware, software, network connectivity, and IT support. Indeed, Kenosha supports its entire IT infrastructure and user base with 1.5 FTEs—a remarkable accomplishment by anyone's standards.

Delivering quality service under such challenging circumstances requires ingenuity and a zealous pursuit of solutions that deliver real value. Two key components in Kenosha's strategy to make this happen revolve around thin-client computing, and using CodeWeavers CrossOver™ technologies to provide Windows compatibility when needed.

Not surprisingly, Kenosha has embraced thin-client computing wholeheartedly, for all its benefits of centralized administration and low cost per user. Neoware™ Business Edition thin-client stations, rather than PCs, are the predominant platform for most city workers. Kenosha plans on continuing its reliance on thin-client technology for the foreseeable future, since it provides an unbeatable value.

Kenosha is also somewhat unique in that the city's government has a long tradition of Unix usage. Consequently, Windows desktop productivity applications never gained more than a foothold on the city's desktops. The majority of users use Corel WordPerfect, although many users are now being migrated to

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**—Ruth Schall
City of Kenosha IT
Director**

CrossOver allows City of Kenosha to provide Windows functionality at a small fraction of the cost of buying new PCs.

StarOffice. Nevertheless, it is imperative that city workers be able to interact with other state and municipal governments, and these entities predominantly use Microsoft desktop applications.

In order to handle these various needs, Tig Kerkman, Kenosha’s IT systems administrator, has installed a Linux desktop productivity server. This quad processor server hosts StarOffice, WordPerfect, Ximian Evolution (the city’s email solution), and Nautilus (for file management). And it also delivers CodeWeavers CrossOver Linux Professional running in Managed MultiUser mode.

CrossOver Linux Pro allows city workers to directly access MSOffice applications, such as Powerpoint, Excel and Word. These applications can be run directly on the city’s thin-client stations, obviating the need to find one of the city’s few PC workstations.

Before CrossOver, a city worker receiving an MSOffice attachment in an Evolution email message had to save the document on the server, open it in WordPerfect, and then wait for the document to be converted—a laborious process that was both non-intuitive and inconvenient for users. But with CrossOver, that same worker simply double-clicks on the document in Evolution. CrossOver then brings up the Windows application and allows them to view and edit the document directly. The seamless integration with Windows productivity applications that CrossOver offers is “priceless”, according to Ruth Schall, the city’s IT Director. She notes that CrossOver has cut down on their workers’ training requirements, thereby reducing the strain on the city’s already lean support staff.

In terms of hard ROI, Kerkman figures that CrossOver has saved him having to put a minimum of two dozen PCs out at various departmental locations to handle Windows compatibility issues, meaning a savings of more than a hundred thousand dollars a year in hardware, software, and administration costs. CrossOver Linux Pro, meanwhile, cost less than 5% of that amount—a 95% savings.

Another corollary benefit to working with CodeWeavers, Kerkman noted, is that the whole open-source software mentality pervades CodeWeavers support as well. When Kerkman had a problem with a printing issue, he had direct access to CodeWeavers’ printing guru—Huw Davies—even though Huw is physically located in the UK. With Huw’s help, Kerkman’s problems were quickly solved. “That level of access is not something a smaller customer like us usually receives,” he noted.

All in all, City of Kenosha is well pleased with CrossOver, and plans on continuing to use it even as the migration to StarOffice continues. In Ruth Schall's words, "There will always be a need for Windows compatibility, and CrossOver allows us to provide that functionality smoothly while remaining on our Linux platform of choice, and remaining within our budget."