

CASE STUDY

FSLogix Is the Secret Ingredient for The Little Potato Company's Microsoft RDS and Office 365 Deployments

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Little Potato Company was founded on the idea of better feeding the world through a sustainable, environmentally friendly potato bursting in flavor and nourishment. Two decades later, the company continues to flourish, propelled by innovation across the organization. This includes the IT team, which migrated to Microsoft Remote Desktop Services (RDS) and Office 365 hosted in the Azure cloud with the intent of achieving further productivity and collaborative gains for its end-users.

But the IT team ran into challenges with Microsoft User Profile Disk (UPD) caused by temporary profile creation and search indexes that were becoming corrupt. The IT team turned to FSLogix Profile Containers and Office 365 Containers for help. The company subsequently extended OneDrive to all of its users while eliminating temporary profiles. In all, the FSLogix deployment helped The Little Potato Company to achieve C\$20,000 in annual productivity gains and cost savings.

HIGHLIGHTS

- > Upwards of 30% savings in Azure compute costs—around C\$10,000 annually
- > Saving over 200 hours in helpdesk-related support for RDS and Office 365 user issues
- > Saved an estimated C\$5,000 by extending OneDrive to all users
- > Improved RDS and Office 365 user experience

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DOUG HOWELL, SR. IT MANAGER, THE LITTLE POTATO COMPANY

Cool Facts About The Little Potato Company

Focus: Creamer potatoes

Employees: 350+

Facilities: 2

Founded: 1996

Headquarters: Edmonton, Canada

Markets: U.S. and Canada

Website: www.littlepotatoes.com

Challenges

- > Eliminate issues caused by temporary user profiles
- > Resolve search and other issues related to local disk consumption
- > Extend OneDrive to all end users
- > Leverage highly available cloud storage for user profiles

Solution

- > FSLogix Profile Container
- > FSLogix Office 365 Container
- > Microsoft Remote Desktop Service (RDS)
- > Microsoft Office 365

The Little Potato Company passionately focuses only on Creamer potatoes. Creamers are nutritious, fully mature, and naturally delicious little potatoes coveted by foodies and families alike. Their exclusive and colorful Creamer varieties are available in produce sections across the U.S. and Canada.

The company was launched when Jacob van der Schaaf, an immigrant to Edmonton, Canada from The Netherlands, found himself longing for the small creamer potatoes of his youth. He and his daughter, Angela Santiago, who now serves as the company's CEO, turned his idea into reality—and the rest is history. The family-owned company celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2016.

MICROSOFT RDS AND OFFICE 365 IN THE AZURE CLOUD

When Senior IT Manager Doug Howell arrived at The Little Potato Company two years ago, he joined at an exciting time. The company's IT department was in the midst of a series of transformative initiatives that included migration to Microsoft RDS and Microsoft Office 365 hosted in the Azure cloud (which went live in May 2016). Howell and his team were chartered to optimize the environment and roll out additional Office 365 features. “The decision to move to RDS and Office 365 had already been made,” Howell recounts. “But we had run into some problems with roaming profiles and elected to move those over to Microsoft UPD in December 2016.”

While UPD rectified some of the problems with roaming profiles, temporary continued to create problems. “We had to develop a number of workarounds to resolve the issues,” Howell says. “But the situation was far from perfect.” For example, whenever users would log in and discover they had received a temporary profile, they would submit a helpdesk ticket. This incurred valuable time on the part of users as well as helpdesk staff who had to fix the original profile to get them back up and running again.

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Search was another problem. Whenever the search index for a user would fill up, users couldn't search their files and would submit a helpdesk ticket. “This happened a couple times every week,” Howell recounts. “These were unpredictable and would come in spurts,” adds Sean Kenny, an IT cloud specialist on Howell's team at The Little Potato Company. “It also was never really perfect. It would index user inboxes fairly well, but it wouldn't index contacts.”

Google Chrome was also impacted by the UPD issues. “We couldn't push extensions to it,” Howell recalls. “Sean jerry-rigged a solution, but it required a log-on script and the folder contents didn't roam, so local disk space was consumed on every host.”

UNABLE TO ADD MICROSOFT ONEDRIVE

In addition to the above support issues, Howell and his staff were blocked from adding OneDrive with their Office 365 deployment. “With upwards of 80 percent of our workforce working on remote desktops, it was impossible to offer a file collaboration solution such as OneDrive,” Howell describes.

The result is that Howell had to use Dropbox in areas where file sharing was a critical function. “But this was expensive, and a number of our users simply didn't get access to it,” he notes. “Plus, even

for those who did get to use Dropbox, it doesn't have the same level of integration with Office 365 as does OneDrive.”

RDP POWERING ERP ON IPADS

The enterprise resource planning (ERP) system for The Little Potato Company is at the heart of its business operations. Manufacturing plants where potatoes come in from the fields, get washed, packed, and shipped to distribution centers and retailers rely exclusively on the ERP system. “We have two plants and run three shifts at each plant, so our RDS environment is in use almost 24 hours a day, six days a week,” Howell says. “Our ERP RDS access in the manufacturing environment is done via Apple iPads. It cannot be run as an app but rather must be accessed via RDS on the iPads because it runs on Microsoft Silverlight.”

Prior to moving from roaming profiles to UPD, our users had to reenter their profile data at the start of every day. “This was a major user frustration and productivity drain,” Howell says. “Not only did it take upwards of three minutes for them to log into the system each day, but they had to reenter all of their profile information each day as well. Then, every couple weeks their profile would corrupt, and they would need to open a helpdesk ticket and wait an hour for assistance.” And while UPD eliminated

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the need for them to reenter their profile for each new session, it did not entirely do away with the creation of temporary profiles that expended valuable cycles through helpdesk tickets and the time required to resolve them.”

SAVORING THE BENEFITS OF FSLOGIX

With these challenges in hand, Howell went in search of a solution. A Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) recommended that he take a look at FSLogix. “We knew our pain points with Office 365 and UPD,” he says. “We wanted to tackle both of those solutions at the same time.” As a result, they decided to deploy both FSLogix Profile Containers and Office 365 Containers at the same time. “We ran a two-week pilot, and FSLogix performed precisely as promised,” Howell comments.

Kenny took the lead in implementing FSLogix. “It was largely a seamless process,” he reports. “The Group Policy templates provide a clear roadmap, and I worked through any issues in a test environment before we moved the whole company over to FSLogix.”

The problems users were experiencing with UPD corruption and search profiles filling up—which resulted in helpdesk calls—were eliminated with FSLogix. Assuming 30 minutes per call and four

calls in total per week, this saves over 100 hours in IT helpdesk time annually. Plus, with users wasting an average of 30 minutes on each of those service requests, the time savings double—over more than C\$12,000 (US\$9,500) in productivity gains annually.¹

With the addition of FSLogix, Howell and his team replaced many Dropbox users with OneDrive. “We also made it available to all of our users, and it has become our standard enterprise-wide document collaboration solution,” Howell says. By consolidating document collaboration onto OneDrive, The Little Potato Company is saving around C\$5,000 annually (US\$3,800). The productivity gains for end users using OneDrive have not been quantified but anecdotal feedback confirms that users are benefiting.

Howell and Kenny also discovered an unexpected benefit with FSLogix. “We didn’t realize how many CPUs we were wasting,” Kenny relates. “There was constant search indexing when someone would log into a new server or the search index had been purged because it filled up the C drive. Other things such as Disk I/O against the C drive for temporary files that we’d put into place for Chrome extensions also consumed CPU cycles.”

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In total, The Little Potato Company went from 7 hosts to 4 with the deployment of FSLogix. Howell estimates a 30 percent reduction in Azure CPU costs—or upwards of C\$10,000 annually (US\$7,800). “The peaks and valleys of CPU utilization no longer exist,” Kenny adds. “With FSLogix, it is a very consistent flat line and very predictable.”

FSLOGIX MAKES ME HAPPY

The availability of FSLogix in multiple form factors—from on-premises to the cloud—enabled The Little Potato Company to seamlessly add it to the company’s RDS and Office 365 deployments in the Azure cloud. “We were early adopters of the Azure cloud,” Howell comments. “The fact that FSLogix can be run on-premises or in the cloud is a huge plus.”

Looking to the future, Howell and Kenny are looking forward using FSLogix Cloud Cache. “We’re very excited about how Cloud Cache will deliver even more performance for us,” Howell says. “The wheels are already turning in Sean’s head about how he can cut costs on some of our back-end storage. Our initial thinking is that we can cut our storage costs for file server clusters used to run our user profiles in half.” He estimates these savings could be at C\$6,000 annually (US\$4,600).

“FSLogix enables us to deliver a consistent experience to all of our users—whether they use RDS on a thin client, in manufacturing on an iPad, or on a corporate-issued Mac or Windows device,” Howell sums up. “This makes me very happy.”

RESOURCES

¹ 208 hours saved annually X C\$60/hour = C\$12,400 in annual productivity gains.

ABOUT FSLOGIX

FSLogix is the leading innovator of solutions that reduce the amount of hardware, time, and labor required to support desktop virtualization platforms. With implementations ranging from less than 1,000 to over 50,000 users, FSLogix Apps enhances user experience and productivity, while reducing support requirements for IT departments. FSLogix is a Microsoft partner, Amazon Workspaces partner, VMware partner, Citrix Ready partner, Red Hat partner, two time Best of Synergy winner, CUGC Alumni, and a first-year sponsor of the CUGC Women in Technology Mentoring program. The company is headquartered in Atlanta, GA, with offices in Salt Lake City, Denver, Boston, the Netherlands, and London, England. For more information, visit www.fslogix.com.