



v-GO Yields Sign-On Relief for 230-Branch Haspa Bank

Challenges

- 6-14 passwords per user
- Customer neglect during credential entry
- Security risks from written passwords
- Weak user-selected passwords
- Thin client, Windows & Web applications
- 360+ password reset calls per month

Results

- Fast automated password entry
- No logon distractions at teller window
- No written passwords to be pilfered
- Automated password changes
- Easy strong password enforcement
- 94% reduction in password reset calls
- Less password IT overhead overall
- Citrix-friendly environment
- 3,000 users deployed, 2,100 to come

ESSO Deployment in Citrix Environment with Linux Thin-Client Terminals

Until 2001, employees at Germany's 230-branch Hamburger Sparkasse (Haspa) needed only one password to access their daily banking applications because all programs were developed in-house with a central password manager. That changed when the savings bank began adding third-party software applications and systems. By 2008, users had to remember and manage different password formats and update policies for up to 14 applications.

The ripple effects were felt throughout the organization. Help desk calls soared. Tellers on shared workstations had to log in and out many times a day. Customers had to wait while employees responded to password prompts. Security risks rose because users were forced to keep track of their passwords on easy-to-steal sticky notes and written lists.

Relief arrived in 2009 with the deployment of v-GO Single Sign-On, the enterprise single sign-on (ESSO) solution that anchors Passlogix's v-GO Access Accelerator Suite. By automating application password entry for users working on Linux thin-client terminals as well as Windows workstations, v-GO is helping Haspa eliminate repetitive user logons, slash help desk calls, close security loopholes, and reclaim customer face time that can be used to strengthen relationships and expand the bank's business.

Signing On with Citrix

Haspa's decision to bank on v-GO was the culmination of months of searching for a strategy to tame the bank's burgeoning password volume. One of the key considerations in choosing a password management platform was the need for seamless and low-resource-intensive operation in Haspa's large server-based computing environment.

More than 2,950 bank branch employees use Linux thin-client terminals as their primary machines, accessing both host-based and embedded browser-based applications from more than 280 servers arrayed in 11 Citrix Metaframe Windows 2003 server clusters. Over 1,000 of those employees also work on shared Windows XP workstations that function both as fat clients and offline when being used at the bank's cash desks. An additional 40 front-office managers and special bank counselors utilize Windows XP laptops connected to the Citrix server farm.

"We needed a password management solution that would work equally well for desktop and Citrix-based computing. On the Citrix side, that included having a small CPU and memory footprint that would help us conserve our Citrix resources and associated equipment needs," said Falk Wollatz, Haspa's Manager of Strategy and IT Architecture.

Wollatz and his team evaluated five well-known ESSO platforms, including Citrix's own Citrix Password Manager. v-GO emerged as the top choice on the Citrix scale, based on product functionality, low resource consumption and a long track record of successful Citrix-based deployments (Passlogix estimates more than 80% of their customers use v-GO products for Citrix delivered applications and/or sessions).



“Manual password entry was a burden on everyone, including customers who had to wait while tellers inserted their credentials.

v-GO’s ability to automate password entry and updates is improving our efficiency, security and customer service.”



Falk Wollatz
Manager of Strategy
and IT Architecture, Haspa

v-GO also met Haspa’s requirements for ease of use, widespread adoption, high rankings by industry analysts including Gartner Inc., and low total cost of ownership enabled by the platform’s rapid wizard-based deployment and ability to utilize the bank’s existing servers and Active Directory database. With v-GO, there would be no need to write scripts or connectors even to homegrown Haspa applications, purchase dedicated hardware, or use a proprietary user profile and credential repository, shortening implementation time and allowing Haspa to leverage existing infrastructure investments.

3,000 Deployed to Date

Haspa’s rollout strategy was to v-GO-enable the bank’s 3,000 tellers, bank counselors, service personnel and front-office managers on an application-by-application basis. The plan was to start with less frequently used programs such as third-party car leasing and credit risk calculators and gradually move to core programs including the bank’s SAP suite and kernel banking application from outsourced provider Finanz Informatik.

The implementation work began in late 2008 with a team of two Haspa employees and one consultant from Envision Software GmbH, a Passlogix channel partner based in Hamburg. The first users went live in early 2009 after detailed rollout planning and extensive testing.

Today, with the v-GO Agent loaded on each Citrix server, users on Linux thin-client terminals launch a browser on the workstation to access the server farm and authenticate to Windows using standard Windows/Active Directory credentials, which simultaneously authenticates them to v-GO SSO. From that point forward, v-GO automatically recognizes and responds to any application username and password requests with the appropriate application credentials, enabling rapid application access without the need for the user to remember or enter the credentials. The same single sign-on benefits are available to front-office users on Windows desktops and notebooks.

In the future, the bank plans to expand the implementation to equip its 2,100 back-office employees with v-GO capabilities. In particular, this will eliminate the need for mobile users working on laptops to remember, manage and input three separate credentials even before requesting application access, including one PIN for mobile connection to the telephone service provider, a second PIN for VPN certificate authorization at the company gateway, and a Windows login to access the company’s Citrix environment.

Early Dividends

With the front-office deployment halfway complete as of this writing, Haspa is already reaping the benefits of v-GO’s automated application password entry.

Password-related help desk calls quickly dropped from more than 360 per month to just 20 because end users no longer needed to keep track of – or even know – different passwords for each application. The Haspa network is more secure because written password records are becoming unnecessary, virtually erasing the risk of password theft. Application passwords are now changed automatically every 90 days with no user involvement, making it possible to enforce strong password policies for the first time.

Most significantly, v-GO has lightened the load on end users. “Every application has a different kind of user ID or challenge. There are personal numbers, customer numbers, passwords with different lengths and composition rules, different password change intervals, web applications that require repeated logons during the day because sessions expire, and so on,” Wollatz noted. “With v-GO, employees don’t have to worry about any of that, so they have more time to focus on serving customers.” And for Haspa, the largest savings bank in Germany, nothing is more important.



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