FORMAL REPORT PROPOSAL

Introduction

The Information Technology department (IT) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) had advocated for switching local desktop computer to Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) in 2009/2010. The Human Resources department (HR) at UBC took part in the Virtual Desktop Pilot Implementation project and switched the majority of its workstations to VDI in 2010.

VDI requires software, hardware and other resources to support virtualization of a standard desktop system. The hardware is a computer terminal called a Thin Client.   A thin client typically has a lifespan of six to ten years. VDI software and other resources such as applications needed for day-to-day work are managed by IT, and the departments that use VDI pay annual fees to IT for these services.

HR is due for a reassessment of the existing equipment this year. The VDI thin clients that were installed in HR back in 2010 are now approaching to the end of lifespan. Due to budget constraints, HR is now faced with the question of whether to replace old VDI thin clients with new VDI thin clients, or to replace old VDI thin clients with local desktop computers.

The target audiences for this report are the Director, HR Information Systems and the Administrator, Office Management and Exec Support for the Human Resources department at the University of British Columbia.

Statement of Problem

The existing VDI thin clients are in need of replacement. The price difference between a thin client and a desktop computer is marginal. VDI user relies heavily on network connection while local desktop users can still work offline when the network is unavailable. Also, increase in annual fees to renew VDI software has become too costly for the department to maintain.

Proposed Solution

One possible solution to the problem of workstation hardware replacement and maintenance cost is to switch from VDI to local desktop computers or laptops. Users are still able to access work files from Home drive or TeamShare drive via Virtual Private Network (VPN) by mapping or mounting these drives on to their personal computer. VDI software can be installed on desktops, laptops and mobile devices on an as-needed basis.

Scope

To assess the feasibility of switching all existing virtual desktop infrastructure thin clients to desktop computers, I plan to examine the following:

1. The number of existing VDI users
2. The number of existing local desktop computers and laptops requiring replacement
3. The cost of replacing existing VDI thin clients with newer VDI thin clients
4. The cost of replacing existing VDI thin clients with local desktop computers

Methods

My primary data source will include workstation inventory survey from HR colleagues, and pricing of VDI thin client and local desktop computer from the institution's preferred vendor. I will also look for related articles comparing pros and cons of both hardware devices.

My Qualifications

The team I am currently in is tasked with workstation inventory assessment for the HR department because we resides in HR and work closely with the IT teams. We are familiar with the technical terminologies used by IT professionals. I have used both VDI and local desktop computers at work, so I am aware of the benefits and challenges of using VDI as compared to local desktop computer.

Conclusion

The HR department will need creative and alternative ways to refine workstation replacement expenses. By examining the four inquiries stated in the scope, I can determine the needs and feasibility of replacing existing VDI thin clients with local desktop computers. If the proposal is approved, I plan to begin the research immediately.