

Case study

Nexthink makes Banque Cantonale Neuchâteloise desktops more homogenous and compliant

Banque Cantonale Neuchâteloise (BCN) in a few words

BCN is a regional bank whose goal is to contribute to Neuchâtel canton's economic and social development by providing its population and businesses with all the services of a universal bank (from asset management to retail banking), for the common good.

With its headquarters in Neuchâtel, a branch at La Chaux-de-Fonds and twelve agencies throughout the canton, BCN, with 350

employees, demonstrates its commitment towards the local population of Neuchâtel canton.

With a balance sheet of more than CHF 7 billion and nearly 45% of the mortgage loan market – a business activity that is particularly important in delicate economic times – Banque Cantonale Neuchâteloise is strengthening its leadership position on the Neuchâtel market.

The challenge – to regain control of its infrastructure

Historically, the management of BCN's IT infrastructure – in particular, its 350 user desktops – was outsourced.

The IT Department, totally dependent on its service provider's user desktop management approach, no longer had any in-house visibility of the real state of the infrastructure, nor much freedom of action over its future (packaging, deployment, etc.).

As part of its strategy for desktop development, deployment and cost management, Banque Cantonale Neuchâteloise decided to get its

autonomy back and use service providers only where they can provide real added value.

The IT Department took advantage of the required changes in the physical infrastructure to migrate the service provider's desktop management approach by taking in-house control over again. In order to support this major change, it needed to have a solution that met two main goals: the inventory of installed end used applications before the migration, then the desktop monitoring and compliance control during and after the migration process.

Nexthink – the right choice for achieving deployment and conclusive results within a few days

"I had followed Nexthink's creation and development. After quickly assessing the current products on the market, we really fell for the Nexthink solution, given how user-friendly and easy to deploy it appeared to be," explains Daniel Vulliemin, Banque Cantonale Neuchâteloise's CIO.

He decided to check out his opinion through a POC (Proof Of Concept). In less than 2 days Nexthink was installed and running on 350 desktops (to test its resilience), giving conclusive results.

"Nexthink's deployment seemed so easy that we thought it was too good to be true, and yet it

turned out to be the case! No sooner we had used the product than we discovered its huge graphics capabilities and a user-friendliness, very comparable to those applications currently available on Smartphones such as the Iphone,” adds Daniel Vulliemin.

Nextthink's selection was confirmed after 2 weeks of testing.

Production running was almost immediate, coming down to installing the final software licenses and a little fine tuning (the Nextthink engine, the choice of history, etc.), to fit in perfectly with Banque Cantonale Neuchâteloise's context and constraints.

Nextthink makes the installed IT base migration easier and helps rationalize software distribution.

In order to prepare for replacing its computer base and migrate its distribution approach, BCN wanted to have exact upstream knowledge of installed applications and how much they were used.

The inventory produced by Nextthink showed that certain applications were either hardly used or not used at all, and revealed a great diversity of applications with extremely similar functions. Within various departments, relatively expensive business applications had been installed on all desktops at users' expressed request. It turned out that they were used only occasionally (once a year for some) whereas their complexity required a regular practice for effective use.

“Nextthink gave us the means of pointing out to users what their true needs were, to migrate only really useful applications, and to rationalize license procurement,” underlines Daniel Vulliemin.

Migrating the installed computer base was only the first step. Afterwards, they had to manage the new workstations to ensure that they was not jeopardized by the installation of illegal software or corrupted by suspicious code, for example.

“Thanks to Nextthink, we can regularly audit all desktops and check their compliance with the standards we set,” points out Raphaël Excoffier, in charge of Banque Cantonale Neuchâteloise technical service.

Nextthink can proactively detect risky behavior and unknown viruses

Nextthink's investigation capacities helped identify behavior that infringed the bank's security policy and enabled corrective action to be deployed.

In this way, Nextthink helped detect that a Password Cracker, launched and used from a USB stick, was executing. Armed with this knowledge, the IT Department was able to guard against the risks connected with this kind of tool by implementing guidelines to forbid their use within the company.

Nextthink also showed that some users accessed flash games whose operation (via Internet) often caused viruses to be downloaded onto desktops. A directive was immediately sent to all bank employees irrespective of their function (from the General Manager down to trainees) to ban

these games and avoid this kind of risky behavior – with a resulting improvement in productivity!

In an entirely different context, Nextthink proved to be essential in protecting the IT infrastructure. Following a call from a user complaining that the Internet connection was not working properly and his PC was slow, the IT Department discovered that “non-standard” software was executing, indicating suspicious behavior (attempts to connect to several websites in Russia, China, etc.). *“Thanks to Nextthink's behavioral analysis of the suspect code, we were able to immediately detect and uninstall a Trojan horse – incorporating a key logger – that our antivirus software didn't have on its list,”* points out Raphaël Excoffier.

Nexthink helps identify the source of performance problems

After the version change of a scanning application, related to the bank's document management system (DMS), several users reported a major loss in performance. To substantiate user perception with the facts, the IT Department observed the change in behavior and the volume of files generated, from the migration of the first system up to the time that complaints were made about slower operation. In this way, they discovered that, for the same service, the file volume was multiplied by 30!

Having ruled out the document characteristics as the cause of the problem (scans showed

identical use of color and number of DPIs), the IT Department used Nexthink to extract and export to Excel the volume of data transferred before and after migration, showing in a concrete manner a significant increase in volume.

"At the start, the editor has questioned his responsibility. The tangible proof we were able to provide thanks to Nexthink and complementary tests we led using it, proved that the performance problems the users were experiencing were due to the new version of scanning software," points out Raphaël Excoffier.

Nexthink, a cost-effective, high value-add investment, providing new expansion possibilities

After its deployment for desktop computers, BCN plans to use Nexthink for managing its mobile devices (laptops to begin with, then iPads). This will require strategic planning to examine the business needs of employees who visit customers, in order to determine the mobile device of tomorrow and how to monitor its use respecting employees' private life (professional and personal use of mobile devices).

"Nexthink is a really inexpensive product compared to the benefits it gives: knowledge of

the infrastructure, the speed at which an investigation can be done to understand the source of an incident, protection against malware, the availability of relevant information relating to the real use of applications, and many more examples. Thanks to the service we are able to provide our users and the ease of creating audit reports – in two mouse clicks – we can readily justify our acquisition of Nexthink," concludes Daniel Vulliemin.

About Nexthink: Nexthink provides the most advanced, intelligent real-time: monitoring, investigation analytics, and root cause analysis for the entire IT Infrastructure from the end-user perspective. Our software helps IT connect, communicate and collaborate to achieve their major initiatives and improve their business end-user's IT experience. Nexthink is complimentary to traditional application performance management (network and server), help desk, operations management, and security tools and eases ITIL change and release management processes. Nexthink serves the Fortune 5000 utilizing a leveraged partner model. Nexthink is a private company headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland. Nexthink® is a registered trademark of Nexthink S.A. To learn more, visit <http://www.nexthink.com>