

UNICON

Federal State Tax Office Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany

Success Story



„The pandemic has shown us quite clearly how essential Unicon solutions are for our daily work.“

The Rhineland-Palatinate State Tax Office, located in Germany, holds the responsibility of servicing and technically supervising 22 smaller tax offices within the region, along with the central tax office of the German federal state. Operating as the authority's data center, the Central Tax Administration Data Processing department (Zentrale Datenverarbeitung der Finanzverwaltung, ZDFin) manages and oversees all tax-related procedures. Additionally, ZDFin handles the administration and procurement of software and hardware for approximately 7,000 employees within the organization.

„Managing the entire infrastructure centrally saves valuable resources and was one of the main reasons we chose to work with Unicon“

Dirk Drexler

Team Leader Client Systems at ZDFin

ZDFin und Unicon: Partnership with Confidence.

For approximately 20 years, Unicon has been supplying ZDFin with modern IT workstations for its financial administration employees, ensuring uninterrupted workflow in all business processes. ZDFin benefits from eLux, a lightweight, hardware-agnostic, Linux-based operating system that operates on devices such as thin clients and laptops. This solution is ideal for a financial authority that handles highly sensitive data on a daily basis, as it is less susceptible to cyber-attacks compared to Windows. In addition, ZDFin utilizes Unicon's Scout Management Solution to centrally and efficiently manage and update all its devices. With the Scout Cloud Gateway, remote devices of the teleworkstations can be connected and uniformly managed without the need for a separate VPN connection.

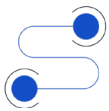
Challenge: Covid-19 as a Catalyst for Digitalization

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, followed by subsequent lockdowns, posed unprecedented challenges for ZDFin's experienced IT experts. They were confronted with new obstacles that demanded swift decision-making and courageous actions. The team had to collaborate and harness their collective efforts to reassess and implement strategies that were previously deemed unimaginable, all in order to maintain full functionality in financial management and uphold the highest security standards.



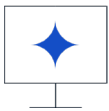
Providing Remote Workspaces

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, only around 10% of the authority's employees worked remotely. However, within a short timeframe, it became necessary for the majority of the approximately 7,000 tax authority employees to be able to work from home.



Device Security

There was no room for compromise when it came to safety. The financial administration had to ensure the continuous protection of highly sensitive data, regardless of the employees' location or the devices they were using.



Monitor and Equipment Shortage

The pandemic had a serious impact on the availability of hardware. Displays, essential for a fully equipped workplace, virtually disappeared from the market.



Unified Communications & Collaborations

The employees of the financial administration needed to maintain connectivity and effective communication despite the physical distance. Additionally, it was crucial to ensure the uninterrupted operations of the College of Finance (Hochschule für Finanzen und Landesfinanzschule), enabling junior tax officials to continue their training through distance learning.



Efficient Device Management

The management and updating of the entire IT infrastructure remained crucial, even for devices located outside the company network. It was necessary to promptly and efficiently install required updates to keep the entire environment up to date and compliant with strict security guidelines.

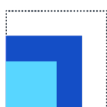
„ Unicon provides us with tremendous added value for our daily work. The challenges of the pandemic have clearly demonstrated this. The eLux operating system is resource efficient and freely configurable, which allowed us to revive old devices easily and quickly. Unicon’s team provided us with the best possible support in the form of special solutions as part of the SCG update, as well as the technical expertise required to implement our video conferencing technology quickly and easily. “

Torsten Käfer

Administrator of the Citrix Terminal Server Infrastructure and the eLux Thin Clients

Solution: Scale, Manage, Secure with Confidence.

Unicon’s software solutions played a decisive role in helping ZDFin successfully meet the challenges the pandemic has presented.



Scaling and Repurposing

Due to the scarcity of monitors and thin clients, eLux was installed on obsolete laptops as an alternative. These laptops were transformed into mobile thin clients and put back into operation. ZDFin supervised this process, which took place on-site in some tax offices, ensuring the devices could be quickly and efficiently handed over to employees. Additionally, most new thin clients from candidate or training workstations were updated and issued to staff.

ZDFin successfully repurposed 2,600 unused fat clients, previously running on the Windows operating system, by migrating them to eLux. This avoided the need to invest in new hardware running Windows OS. The repurposing initiative resulted in substantial cost savings of €2,470,000 compared to purchasing new fat clients with Windows. Furthermore, ZDFin saved an additional €234,000 on licenses by utilizing the Unicon solution instead of Microsoft’s offering. As a result, the ZDFin team swiftly provided 2,600 fully functional remote workspaces to employees, enabling them to work from home.



Managing Securing

One of the major challenges faced by ZDFin was effectively managing the distributed devices now operating from remote locations. Ensuring client software updates for these remote workspaces was crucial from both a security and functionality perspective. To address this, the Scout Cloud Gateway (SCG) was introduced as a solution to securely connect endpoints in home offices and on the Internet to the existing Scout server. The system automatically detects whether (mobile) thin clients are connected to the Internet or the internal network. This significantly simplified device management for ZDFin, regardless of whether they were in a home office, on the move, or physically on the premises. It also facilitated the efficient distribution of up-to-date software versions on a regular basis.

The consistent, secure, and efficient deployment and management of all endpoints led to cost savings of an additional €499,000 over the three-year period.



Creating New Communication Opportunities

Only a few weeks into the pandemic, ZDFin initiated the 'Video Conferencing Systems and Digital Learning' project. The objective was to facilitate communication among employees and counterparts in other German states through video conferencing technology. Unicon provided guidance to ZDFin on the implementation of the Zoom video conferencing solution, a package fully supported by Unicon, enabling its customers to benefit from its optimized usage.

„With Unicon’s software solutions, we were able to overcome the challenges the pandemic created for IT operations successfully and scale up tremendously within a very short time.“

Dirk Drexler

Team Leader Client Systems at ZDFin

Results

The Rhineland-Palatinate financial administration successfully ensured constant and highly productive business processes while adhering to strict security guidelines, even in home offices. The introduction of modern video conferencing technology was made possible with maximum security. The utilization of Unicon technologies, including eLux, Scout, and Scout Cloud Gateway, played a pivotal role in achieving uninterrupted operations during the pandemic and resulted in significant cost savings in various areas.

Over the span of three years, the following cost savings were achieved:

- Hardware investments: €2,470,000
- Software savings: €234,000
- Optimized deployment: €199,333
- Optimized endpoint management: €300,000

In total, the accumulated savings after three years amounted to €3,203,333. These cost savings demonstrate the financial benefits of utilizing Unicon technologies and the efficient management of repurposed laptops within secure eLux workspaces.



€ 3.2 Million

Total accumulated savings after three years



2.600

Unused fat clients that were previously running on the Windows operating system were repurposed and transformed into mobile thin clients.



75%

The percentage of employees who could work permanently from home increased to 75% compared to only approximately 10% before Covid-19



ZOOM

Zoom was established as a video conferencing tool thanks to the plugin on eLux thin clients and laptops

Overview

Industry: Public Sector / Finance

Employees: Approx. 7,000 employees at the state office and the tax offices; 215 at the ZDFin

IT Structure Clients: Fujitsu, Dell and HP thin clients, mobile clients in the form of Fujitsu, Dell and HP laptops, Fujitsu desktop PCs, webcams, headsets, and printers

Key Challenge:

- Scaling from 750 to 5700 remote workspaces within a very short period of time
- Remote device management and updates
- Adherence to the highest safety standards when working from home

Solution:

- Reviving discarded equipment by installing eLux
- Scout Cloud Gateway for remote device management Introduction of video conferencing technology via Zoom plugin on eLux thin clients
- Central update of client software regarding security and functionality using Scout management solution
- Huge savings up to 3.203.3333 euros in 3 years deploying Unicon solution instead of a Windows solution.

About Unicon

Unicon is a renowned technology company and a trailblazer in thin client software. With their flagship products, eLux and Scout, Unicon provides a robust software solution for centralized IT architectures. Currently, Unicon software is utilized to operate and manage over two million end-devices in more than 65 countries worldwide. Their esteemed clientele comprises prominent organizations in the financial and insurance sectors, retail industry, and public sector. Unicon is headquartered in Karlsruhe, Germany.



1993

founded



2.5M

end-devices secured



65

countries



25+ years

experience

Become part of the Unicon success story!

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