![xangati] ![WEIR]

Priming the Pump:
Xangati Helps Weir's Cloud
and VDI Waters to Flow

Customer Success Story

In 1871, brothers George and James Weir founded a company focused on creating novel pumping equipment, primarily aimed at steam ships being built at Glasgow's Clyde shipyards. Today, Weir operations now encompass more than 70 countries and 14,000 employees, focusing on the mineral, oil and gas, and power industries. As a company famous for its innovative hardware, it's no surprise that Weir is on a never-ending search for the most effective tools available to help with its growth and success. This applies just as much deep in the field as it does in the depths of its data centers.

Over the last several years, Weir Minerals in North America worked diligently to streamline its IT operations with the power of virtualization. The group adopted VMware vSphere and vCenter for rendering its 150 servers into a cloud powerhouse, and it deployed VMware Horizon to realize the cost and management benefits of virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) to 320 stations.

"We had all of the right pieces in place," says Lowry Stiles, Infrastructure Manager for Weir Minerals out of Madison, Wisconsin. "It was a lot to handle; infrastructure issues are impossible to avoid completely, but Weir was spotting too many of them too late, so if we were going to do a virtualized cloud and VDI the right way, we had to get smarter about it."

OVERCOMING TURBULENCE

Weir delivers some formidable software packages to its hundreds of scattered workers, including graphics-intensive apps such as AutoCAD. Stiles notes that his IT group monitors several key performance indicators, but ultimately the biggest sign boiled down to one thing: staff calling in to complain about laggard and locked application performance. Nothing makes a negative impression on a prospective client quite like seeing the schematics for a proposed dewatering facility freeze up in mid-pitch.

Weir initially turned to SolarWinds for network monitoring and analysis, as well as a handful of other tools, but ultimately none of these utilities provided the results that the company so badly needed. Finally, Weir Minerals gave the free trial of Xangati's cloud performance management software a shot. Within only a few days, without the need to deploy agents or probes, the improvements in insight and results became immediately apparent.

"We had no visibility into our VDI environment," says Weir's Stiles, "so when performance issues and other complaints came in, the time to diagnose those issues was costly. With Xangati in place, we were able to respond quicker, be more proactive, and do the kind of granular analytics required to get to the root cause of an issue."

"Other solutions are more reactive," Stiles adds. "They don't monitor in real time like Xangati does, so they can't capture that proactive edge that Xangati offers. Xangati turns all that live data into superior analytics results, and that in turn converts into tons of saved hours for my teams."

While specifics vary across products, in general Xangati's platform yields 300x the data granularity of competing management solutions. Competing tools typically operate on an interval basis on the order of 5 to 15 minutes between infrastructure snapshots, given that their data are reported retrospectively. In contrast, Xangati performs an agentless, second-by-second assessment of hundreds of factors spanning compute, network and storage resources from the data center backbone to handheld clients at the network's edge. With so much more information feeding into its adaptive analytics engine, Xangati more forcefully spots emerging contention issues before they blow up into true problems, delves more accurately into root cause correlations, and more quickly automates effective remediation actions on behalf of IT.

REAL RESULTS

In the months that followed the Xangati deployment, which leverages DVR-like recording of infrastructure conditions for deep analysis, Stiles notes that Weir Minerals made (and continues to make) significant improvements across its virtualized infrastructure. Complaint calls from admins and field reps dropped. Resource load balancing remains optimized and within threshold levels IT prescribes. More efficient use of resources, in turn, allows Weir to invest less capital in unneeded equipment and realize higher ROI on its existing assets.

Ongoing analysis revealed that Weir's servers tended to experience pockets of CPU constraint, and the company's networking infrastructure and storage was prone to bouts of I/O bottlenecking. Most worrisome, but arguably predictable in hindsight given the nature of its end-user applications, were issues related to available memory depletion among servers and the impact this scarcity had on client responsiveness. Xangati helped to identify all of these trouble spots, frequently in real time and occasionally through the use of Xangati's Visual Trouble Ticket system, which allows end-users to capture the exact degrading condition they're experience at the client/endpoint level.

The intelligence service that Xangati provides goes straight to the heart of enterprise virtualization — an intricate, expansive and potentially overwhelming sea of data where even seasoned IT veterans may hesitate to swim. However, Xangati consolidates this tide of information into a simplified, extensible dashboard that's intuitive enough for nearly any IT professional to master. In fact, while there are four people on Stiles' team trained to administer Xangati, the entire platform is primarily managed by just one person. The Weir group keeps the dashboard visualized on a large display overlooking their cubicles like an arena scoreboard, allowing them to keep a constant eye on conditions without being encumbered by round-the-clock monitoring.

"The biggest value for Weir from using Xangati is that the system administrators and engineers can focus their efforts on resolving real issues rather than dealing with constant performance complaints and other random task. They're much happier with a proper tool that can help them do their jobs more effectively and, most importantly, more efficiently. This value comes back in the form of the most expensive currency — time. Who doesn't want more time in the day to do real work, rather than struggling to find answers that Xangati provides automatically?"

- Lowry Stiles
Infrastructure Manager, Weir Minerals

About Xangati

Xangati is a Silicon Valley software innovator of Xangati ESP, a service assurance analytics and performance control platform that optimizes virtual app workloads through self-healing triggers for performance issues, while optimizing capacity against cost advantages, with minimal administrator intervention or agents, benefitting from an in-memory platform architected for automation based on machine-learned heuristics. Xangati empowers next-generation data center sysadmins to tie cloud performance management to business outcomes such as enterprise KPIs, end-user quality of experience, IT agility and productivity, infrastructure ROI and risk mitigation. The Xangati ESP platform provides highly granular metrics and end-to-end visibility for virtualized data centers and hybrid-cloud environments. Organizations such as Comcast, British Gas, Colliers, Harvard and the U.S. Army trust Xangati to resolve service quality issues more quickly by diagnosing root causes of contention storms and assure overall infrastructure health.

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www.xangati.com
Phone: +1 (408) 252-0505
Sales Inquiries: sales@xangati.com
Support: support@xangati.com