



## Freeze.com Streamlines IT Operations with Citrix Provisioning Server for Datacenters

### SUCCESS PROFILE



*We needed a solution that would assist in providing a responsive and reliable infrastructure capable of adapting to demand and momentary shifts of traffic - we needed something that could scale four times the number of servers – a solution that didn't require four times the space, servers and staff."*

Kyle Ohme, Director of IT for  
Freeze.com

Freeze.com is the internet's premier screen-enhancement site and receives more than four million page views per day. Freeze.com selected Citrix Provisioning Server for Datacenters to streamline its day-to-day operations, maximize return on its IBM BladeCenter deployment, and better support scaling its IT operations to accommodate the company's explosive growth. Utilizing Citrix Provisioning Server, which enables the on-demand streaming of operating systems and workloads from networked storage, Freeze.com has been able to:

- dramatically reduce the time needed to provision servers "from five hours to five minutes";
- enable on-demand server provisioning to meet frequent spikes in server utilization;
- quadruple productivity - IT staff has four times the management capacity it had before deploying Citrix Provisioning Server;
- solve backup and disaster recovery challenges;
- eliminate the expense of additional power/cooling because disk drives are not needed in each blade.

### FREEZE.COM - PROFILE:

#### TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Launched in 2001, Minnesota-based Freeze.com offers high quality, family content - primarily screen savers and graphics for the PC desktop. In addition to free content, Freeze.com sells more complete products to its customer base, cross sells other products, and executes third-party promotional programs. Freeze.com's business model creates significant spikes in the demands on its computing infrastructure and in order to deliver a high-quality experience that will enable it to retain customers, the company wanted to insure that its computing infrastructure could handle peak demands. Retaining its existing architecture would require building upon the computer infrastructure to handle the peak loads, which would erode profits in an already competitive environment.

In summary, the key challenges Freeze.com faced in its datacenter operations included:

- maximizing the utilization of deployed servers - not overbuild or underbuild the infrastructure; avoid unnecessary layers of software that could impact performance;
- repurposing servers to support extraordinary, but temporary, web site activity;
- insuring a disaster recovery site could reflect the then-current state of the active site;
- provisioning development and test beds in minutes rather than hours;
- reducing the IT staff time needed to provision servers and spending more time on value-added processes.



## CITRIX PROVISIONING SERVER FOR DATACENTERS PROVIDES SOLUTIONS:

"We have only begun to realize how easy we have it now - what was once a tedious task of reprovisioning servers, now seamlessly is a click of a mouse. With Citrix we have built a full fault-tolerant workload environment that allows us to recover to multiple datacenters if needed. Our storage and backups all reside in a few key areas now - not several like in a typical environment," said Kyle Ohme, Director of IT for Freeze.com.

Freeze.com met its challenges by utilizing Citrix Provisioning Server for Datacenters' functionality to re-allocate blades during peak-load periods. Citrix Provisioning Server for Datacenters enables Freeze.com to quickly ("in minutes") re-provision back office blades to expand the footprint of the front-end web farm to handle the peak loads. After a campaign runs its course, Freeze.com quickly returns those "borrowed" blades to back-office workloads to handle the peak loads. If the back office needs additional capacity to catch up on backlog, Freeze can re-purpose front-end blades for these tasks.

Freeze.com leverages Citrix's technology that streams an OS and workload out to several blades from networked storage - rather than copying the whole OS onto each blade.

## FREEZE.COM'S ALTERNATIVES

Because the stakes were high in terms of the potential savings, Freeze.com invested the necessary resources to identify the best solution to meet its challenges. Freeze considered the following alternatives:

- iSCSI's or native SAN remote boot technologies
- Other third-party server management suites

Remote boot features of SAN or iSCSI required that Freeze.com purchase proprietary hardware such as HBAs or storage switches. Citrix Provisioning Server for Datacenters is preferable as it is a software-only solution that delivers the desired capability without locking in on any particular hardware component. Other third-party server management approaches required that a complete copy of the OS be delivered to every server, a far more cumbersome, time-consuming, less-flexible, and error-prone process. With Citrix Provisioning Server for Datacenters, the administrator can simply assign a configuration to a particular group of blades. When these blades are rebooted, the new configuration is streamed on-demand.

## KEY ELEMENTS IN FREEZE.COM IMPLEMENTATION

- Citrix Provisioning Server for Datacenters
- IBM BladeCenter and IBM HS20 Blades with up to 84 Servers per industry standard rack
- Freeze Applications
- Windows 2003 Webserver Edition
- Apache web server, Microsoft SMS, Altiris, HP OpenView, IBM Tivoli, BladeLogic, RLX, OpForce, Egenera, TopSpin

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