

# Ballet West



## Case Study - Ballet West

### Slow, Outdated Hardware Doesn't Have to Hinder Productivity

Eighty percent of Jack Stahl's day was spent just trying to get everyone's computer to work. Maybe not a big deal if Stahl's job was IT – but it wasn't. He was supposed to be the ticketing manager for Ballet West.

"Our server was seven years old and it was the newest piece of hardware we had," says Stahl, who inherited IT responsibilities when Ballet West's CFO left for a new job. "I was spending 80 percent of my time on computers and the network and we still felt we were hemorrhaging our staff's time."

At the heart of the problem were the XP-era computers the ballet was running. Like a lot of non-profits, Ballet West's computers came directly from donors. While each was a welcomed gift, together the computers amounted to a hodgepodge of used hardware. No standardization was possible, licensing was a major headache, and the end of Microsoft

	BEFORE	AFTER
SERVER	7 years old	none required
APPS THAT COULD RUN CONSECUTIVELY	1	unlimited
TECH SUPPORT	80% of IT's day	0% of IT's day
REMOTE ACCESS	0%	100%



XP support left everything vulnerable to attack. Compounding the problem was a lack of resources: there was no money to upgrade the ballet's nearly four dozen computers and no way to get new versions of the software to run on outdated hardware.

*Ballet West was grateful for donated computer equipment but the age and hodgepodge caused plenty of headaches.*

And it wasn't just affecting Stahl, who was struggling to find the time to keep up with his ticketing responsibilities when he was always being dragged away to resolve an IT issue. Staff wanted to use social media apps to keep in touch with donors and patrons, but couldn't without shutting down all other applications. Marketing needed graphics applications, but the computers were too slow. Reports were coming in of boot-ups that took 5 minutes or more. Systems would fail resulting in a loss of critical information. And remote access? That was merely a pipe dream.

### **Old Hardware with New Life, Thanks to Desktop as a Service (DaaS)**

Something had to give. So, after reviewing all the options, it came down to two possible solutions: reallocate money and donations from elsewhere into the ballet's tech resources, which would include new hardware, licenses and a dedicated IT team to ensure the system ran smoothly, or breathe new life into what the ballet already had with a Desktop as a Service (DaaS) solution instead.

"Money and time are always concerns for non-profits," says Stahl. "So we opted for DaaS." Ballet West chose the DaaS route because of how its Salt Lake City neighbor, Nuvestack, approaches DaaS. First, DaaS would mean that the existing XP computers would stop running resident apps – the old tech could still be used but it would now provide access to the latest software. To do this, users would log into a virtual desktop from Nuvestack, where they access the newest version of their apps – everything from the Microsoft Office suite to Raisers Edge, an app specifically for fundraising. Old systems wouldn't get bogged down because every app runs directly from the Cloud.

Whenever users have an IT need or a concern, they'd contact Nuvestack, which includes tech support as part of its subscription model. Licensing and updates are also automatic because all of the apps live on the Nuvestack server, not resident on the user's computer.

Ballet West staff could also access the system from their own devices (known as BYOD – bring your own device), including tablets and smartphones. So if they wanted to quickly check on a donor's giving history while attending a community event, they could just log into their Cloud desktop, access the app and the information, and get the answers they need immediately – a huge improvement for both donor relations and fundraising opportunities.

“Nuvestack gives all Ballet West users their own desktop that can be accessed anywhere – all they need is an Internet connection,” says Ivan Escobar, Nuvestack Vice President. “This means they can use their own devices or even the ballet's pretty outdated hardware. So we were able to let them be productive. Now they can replace the XP-era equipment as they're able – but they're not being hindered by it in the meantime.”

### **Nuvestack's Solution**

It took about 30 days for Nuvestack to migrate the ballet's system, which included wiping old hardware and loading each with a clean copy of Windows and a thin client application used to access the Nuvestack desktop. Boot times immediately improved and the hardware was stabilized with single system image across all the machines.

At the same time, Nuvestack engineers also created a standard desktop for Ballet West that includes Microsoft Office as well as custom applications that individual users require. This desktop can be accessed from PCs, smart phones and tablets.

“It works great,” says Sarah West, Ballet West's Director of Development. “We can start the solicitation for donations whenever we encounter a potential donor, and we can pay proper attention to current donors.”

The Nuvestack solution, which includes all software licensing and customer support, also allows Stahl to spend more time on what he was first hired to do, managing the ballet's ticketing – although he is now officially sharing that with the technology role that he inherited, too. It's okay though, because now he CAN wear these two hats, since the time-consuming desktop management responsibilities are handled by Nuvestack.

How does this work for Stahl? “For example,” says Stahl, “we no longer worry about software licensing, which used to be mind-bendingly complex. Nuvestack gets us state-of-the-art software without me or anyone with Ballet West having to do license renewals. Our system is fully functional, always brand new, and if we have a problem, I don't have to be the one to troubleshoot it.”

---

*The Nuvestack solution, which includes all software licensing and customer support, also allows Stahl to spend more time on what he was first hired to do, managing the ballet's ticketing*