Aruba Networks and Citrix® Power the Cloud-Based Virtual Branch Office

Just as the global business environment continues to change, the way that work is performed must also evolve to keep organizations competitive. New challenges include retaining the best talent regardless of location, meeting energy and pollution reduction goals, preparing disaster contingency plans, and outsourcing non-core functions – all while reducing costs. Achieving these goals means that many employees will not work on a central campus or in a traditional branch office. However, they still require access to IT services and applications just as if they were at a desk on the headquarters campus. These factors create a perfect storm of conflicting needs that – if handled incorrectly – results in spiraling costs to deliver remote networking and applications.

To solve these challenges, Aruba Networks and Citrix have teamed up to build network and application solutions for distributed enterprises through Aruba’s Virtual Branch Network (VBN) solution and the Citrix XenApp® application virtualization technology. Together, these solutions deliver data, video, voice, and centralized applications to remote sites, all with centralized control. It is simple enough to be installed by the end user, but powerful enough to deliver a complete ‘headquarters’ experience for remote users.

Citrix XenApp solves application delivery, update, and compatibility challenges by virtualizing enterprise applications in the data center. A single instance of an application can be delivered to multiple users, reducing the need to install and maintain copies on each remote device. Updates are handled on the XenApp server and pushed out to users, ensuring that software is up-to-date and consistent across the organization. XenApp is not tied to a single OS so that employees and contractors can use the technology that suits them without encountering compatibility issues and unsupported platforms.

Aruba’s VBN products change the way the network edge is deployed. It offers the simplicity and economics of an SSL VPN with the robustness and power of a branch router for wired and wireless connectivity. Using Aruba Mobility Controllers at the data center with plug-and-play Remote Access Points (RAPs) at remote sites, the VBN solution creates a secure on-ramp to the enterprise network. This always-on, hardware-based solution can run over any IP wide-area transport, including 3G cellular and consumer-class broadband.

The Aruba/Citrix Advantage

Centralized Policy and Control
Aruba and Citrix platforms are both delivered from a centralized location, allowing network and application engineers to keep control at the datacenter while maintaining simplicity at the edge.

Seamless Application Access
XenApp virtualized applications can be delivered to remote locations with prioritized access and without user retraining.

Headquarters-Like Experience
Access to enterprise services such as voice, video, and security without additional appliances, configuration, VPN software, token cards, or user retraining.

Always-on Connectivity
Automatic discovery and failover within and between the data center and remote sites with wired and 3G cellular access over any broadband Internet connection.

Zero-Touch Installs
User-installable design dramatically lowers the cost of deployments.

Wired and Wireless Security
Role-based policy enforcement and authentication for each user and device.

Centralized Management & Compliance Reporting
The AirWave Management Platform® (AMP) provides a single interface from which to manage your entire remote network, including reporting and compliance auditing tools.
Centralized Policy and Control – Both Aruba and Citrix are centrally managed applications. Each is configured in the data center, and updates are pushed out to end users. There is no need to touch individual desktops to install updates or check to make sure service patches have been installed. Once a change is made in the data center, the results are pushed to the edge devices. The combined Aruba and Citrix solution is simple, low cost, secure, plug-and-play, and offers the most robust always-on connectivity solution on the market today.

Seamless Application Access – The Citrix XenApp solution virtualizes applications, allowing a consistent work flow to be pushed out to end users. Applications work just as they do at the corporate office, with no change for the end user. Users on different operating systems see the same applications with the same functionality, lowering the learning curve and easing the load on the help desk.

Headquarters-Like Experience – Aruba RAPs extend the workplace experience anywhere with an Internet or cellular connection. Laptops and VoIP phones work just like they do in the office – including extension dialing, video streaming, and local printing. This makes the transition to remote work seamless for the end user and increases productivity by providing a fully functional ‘on campus’ work environment. Traffic can be prioritized across the WAN link to provide application quality of service (QoS). In addition, the VPN heavy lifting is handled by the network infrastructure rather than the desktop to increase responsiveness to the user.

Always-on Connectivity – The Aruba solution supports both intranet and intradata center redundancy. RAPs discover alternative paths automatically and do not need to be individually programmed. If a wired WAN link fails, select RAP models can automatically switch to a 3G cellular modem for dial backup. The cellular modem plugs into a USB port, allowing for a wide range of modems and service providers.

Zero-Touch Installs – RAPs can be deployed without IT touching any of the devices before shipping them to the end user. Using secure digital certificates, any authorized RAP automatically becomes part of the enterprise infrastructure. The end user needs only to enter the URL of the controller into a simple web form. Configuration and software updates are done in real-time as configuration changes are made.

Wired and Wireless Security – RAPs feature secure enterprise-grade wired and wireless connections that include encryption and user authentication to protect the remote network. Aruba’s embedded Policy Enforcement Firewall (PEF) makes routing, policy, and prioritization decisions for full identity-based security and policy control. In addition, Aruba’s Wireless Intrusion Prevention (WIP) module provides advanced wireless security at the remote site, including rogue AP scanning required for PCI compliance.

Centralized Management – Management and reporting is provided by the AirWave Management Platform (AMP). AMP provides visibility into the LAN side of the branch office and includes information about users and devices. It also links into third-party IT management software for more extensive reporting capabilities, has open XML APIs for integration with external systems, and has specialized views for Help Desk, Security/Audit groups, and executive management. SOX, HIPAA, PCI, GLBA and other regulations mandate how data is handled, including the separation of data and reporting. Aruba’s PEF module and AMP are uniquely suited to enforce administrative policies and assist with compliance reporting.