Liquit Partners with ZuidOostzorg to Deliver a Digital Workspace Supporting a Staff of 2500 Across 14 distributed Care Homes

Customer: ZuidOostZorg covers fourteen nursing and care homes and a home care department in the southeast of Friesland.

Challenge: The on-premises data center and internally managed remote desktop server resulted in a technically challenging user and management experience for its 2500 employees and IT team This made application access and collaboration a challenge that adversely affected their ability to support efficient operations and optimum care management.

Solution: The first phase was a switch to a cloud platform for digital services and implementation of Embrace social intranet portal software. Embrace recommended Liquit Workspace and Access Manager to provide the application access, single sign on, and overall user experience that would meet all employee needs.

Results: Users now have single-click access to all their applications from anywhere on any device with simple and agile application provisioning. The result has been a major improvement in user experience collaboration and communication that has further facilitated care optimization.happy end-users.

ZuidOostZorg

ZuidOostZorg covers fourteen nursing and care homes, with a home care department in the southeast of Friesland and one in Dokkum. This required a digital workplace for 2500 employees to replace a barely used legacy work environment. As project leader, ZuidOostZorg Information Manager Tjeerd van der Schaaf has been closely involved over the past two years with the rollout of the Embrace social intranet. "Healthcare is becoming increasingly demanding, so we have to do smart things that make work easier, which meant we needed an innovative platform to support our distributed care workforce."

ZuidOostZorg used their own internal digital working environment based on a remote desktop server (RDS). "We managed this system from our own data centre with a team of six full-time technical people taking care of the maintenance of servers and applications," explained Tjeerd.

While the digital workstations were well-organized, the system required a lot of effort to manage, maintain, and update. The working environment could not provide efficiency and value to the 2,500 employees since it emphasized the technical rather than the practical aspects

that the workforce required. "There was little time to find out and understand what the health care workers really needed," added Tjeerd.

The digital workplace outside the office

According to Tjeerd, the healthcare provider decided to do things differently around 2013:
"We wanted to create a place where employees could find everything they could really use and no longer have to worry about technology. That's when we started our journey on the road to perfecting the digital working environment, knowing it would take several years to get there."

As a first step, ZuidOostZorg changed its digital working environment to a cloud service. This gave the in-house team time to deal with other things while accessing the information needs of the organization.

"We had to determine how to do things now and what we needed, so we had to make a few crucial decisions," explained Tjeerd. "Over the next several years, we evaluated our application stack, and eventually decided on a SaaS model for our core applications, such as our ECD and other core systems we use in healthcare."

Parallel to that changeover, ZuidOostZorg made a dramatic decrease in the number of applications it used. "Applications were fragmented, which meant employees had to work in different systems. We reduced our applications from 100 to a core set of around 60 applications, which made it easier for our staff."

Social intranet

When ZuidOostZorg switched from a hierarchical structure to self-organization in 2018, they also changed their perspective on digital workplaces. "Our IT roadmap had already laid out a route where end user portals would enable starting any application and finding any document or service they need," explained Tjeerd.

It was important for the new ZuidOostZorg digital work environment to empower employees to use many external applications from the platform. They considered various Microsoft solutions and products from other suppliers, but they all lacked the desired level of user accessibility.

Embrace social intranet software impressed everyone at ZuidOostZorg when they learned about it. "Embrace immediately appealed to our employees because it was easy to use, with people comparing it to Facebook," said Tjeerd. The care organisation made the choice quickly, and started incrementally replacing its existing intranet with Embrace starting in April 2018.

Fast access with Liquit

Among the most critical requirements was access to applications from the intranet, and Embrace played an important role in the decision. "Embrace informed us they use Liquit Workspace, and although we were initially unfamiliar with it, we were enthusiastic when we got to know it," said Tjeerd.

Liquit Workspace provides users quick and easy access to all their applications. It doesn't matter whether they access those applications via SaaS, a server, or they're on the user's device. That's because ZuidOostZorg could integrate Liquit Workspace

into its social intranet via a widget.

"We wanted to create a situation facilitating employees from their position and their work location with an environment where they can easily find what they need," said Tjeerd. "Liquit is perfect for that since it offers the applications people need for their work based on their profile."

A special extra feature of Liquit Workspace is that it also provides identity access management via Liquit Access Manager. This gives ZuidOostZorg extensive single sign-on (SSO) options. "We have spent a long time looking for an affordable, complete web solution that supports SSO, but until recently there was no such solution," explained Tjeerd.

All the non-privacy-sensitive systems they use now work with SSO. "We have used the Liquit SSO solution since September 2019, and I believe we are the first customer to do so in production mode, so we're leading the way with a solution that works very well," added Tjeerd.

Far-reaching cooperation

ZuidOostZorg ran a pilot for the implementation of Liquit in a proof-of-concept (POC) environment in the same way as they did for the social intranet. The healthcare provider called in their Netherlands-based IT integrator and consulting partner Netflex to assist with the project at an early stage. "They supervised the POC, guided the project's transition into production, and continue to be involved in implementing support and maintenance around Liquit."

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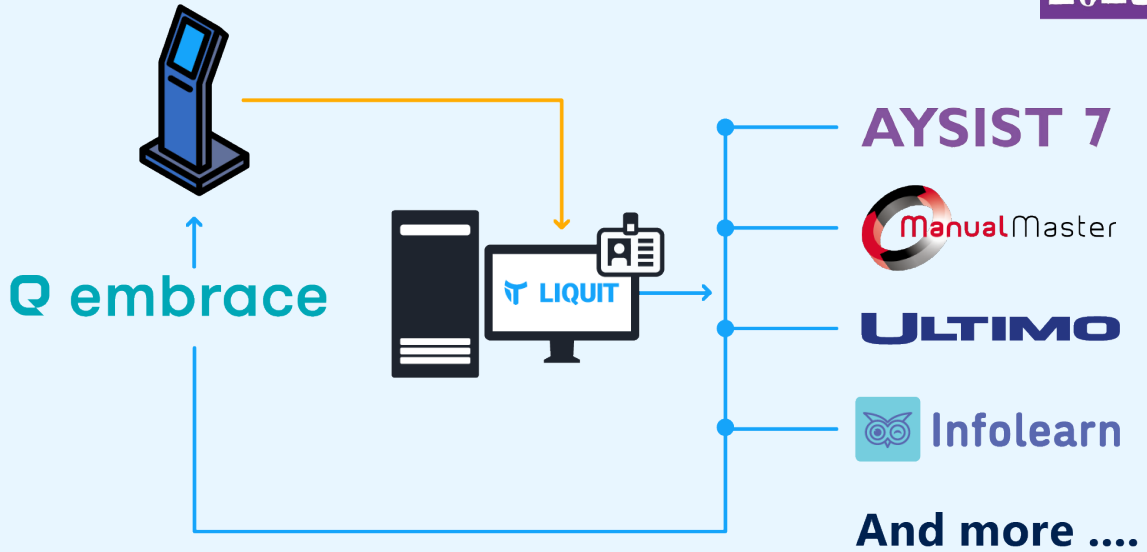
Tjeerd explained Netflex was instrumental in assisting ZuidOostZorg in identifying the needs of the users, which led to the healthcare institution becoming the very first user of Liquit Access Manager:

"IT project implementations like this never go completely as planned, so the support of partners and their willingness to solve challenges is vital to project success. Netflex has continued to help us scale up successfully, which is something you cannot take for granted."

"It is important to have suppliers that can collaborate, and there was constant contact between the Embrace developers, the Netflex team, and Liquit, which resulted in us reaping the benefits," said Tjeerd. In the end, everything was technologically sound, and the rollout of Liquit went smoothly."

Future projects involve ZuidOostZorg looking at opportunities to make things even easier for employees. "Our first phase brought in the most used applications so that employees immediately see the improvements. We're now ready to integrate the more complex applications."

Smart technology to make demanding work easier

Tjeerd explained that the transition to a new digital workspace environment is a complex but interesting process of development where the goal remains the same, but there are always changes in

the route to getting there. "You must make different choices than you initially expected along the way, but our main priority was always to make the system easier for employees while facilitating everything from a central location. The technology and its cost savings must always come second to user experience."

ZuidOostZorg has been using its new intranet for over a year with the Liquit Workspace in place for over six months now. "Users are very enthusiastic about their ability to access their applications with a single click with no need to log into different systems," explained Tjeerd. We've reduced lead times by a large amount and even if Embrace were ever to be offline, we will always have a bypass to the Liquit environment."

Tjeerd observes that the new intranet is slowly taking up an important position within ZuidOostZorg, and other healthcare institutions in the area are aware that something special is going on.

"Other healthcare organizations regularly ask us if they can come and see how our system works, and we're happy to show them since we all have the same challenges. Healthcare is under increasing pressure from many changes and employee shortages have become critical. We need smart solutions to support our colleagues and make their healthcare work easier and I'm convinced that the right technology is indispensable in attaining that goal. That way, we can offer clients better care, which is what it's all about."

About Liquit

Founded in 2015 in the Netherlands, Liquit is a software vendor that delivers Enterprise-ready End-to-End Application Management for Hybrid Environments. Liquit bridges the gap between the IT department and the end-users. The Liquit platform makes accessing corporate IT resources for end-users less complex and easier than ever. With Liquit, IT departments have the tools that empower them to immediately respond to business requirements, enhance user productivity, and give their organization a competitive advantage.