

# Gen-i Delivers Powerful Technology Solution for Genesis Energy

Using effective project management and comprehensive user communication, Gen-i delivered one of the smoothest end-to-end technology upgrades that Genesis Energy has ever experienced.

As the largest New Zealand energy retailer, Genesis Energy views technology as central to the smooth running of its business and effective delivery of customer services. With this in mind, the company saw the need to upgrade its technology infrastructure to Microsoft XP and Office 2003 and replace its proprietary desktop management solution, which was nearing the end of its lifecycle.

Working with partner Gen-i, Genesis Energy successfully delivered new desktop technology across 560 computers and 530 users. The project was completed on time and under budget and met all of the business objectives.

## Business Background

Genesis Energy is a state-owned enterprise with a diverse electricity generation portfolio and is New Zealand's largest energy retailer. As a dual fuel provider, offering customers electricity and gas, its portfolio includes New Zealand's largest thermal power station at Huntly, hydro stations at Tongariro and Waikaremoana as well as a wind farm in the Wairarapa. Genesis Energy has over 700,000 customers located predominantly in the North Island. The company's business sites include Greenlane, Huntly, Hamilton, Tokaanu, Tuai, and Wellington.

## Challenge

As with any enterprise providing a public utility, technology is central to the smooth running of the business and effective delivery of services to customers.

After reviewing its technology infrastructure in 2004, Genesis Energy identified the need to replace its proprietary desktop management solution, which was nearing the end of its lifecycle. Its business objective was to move to an industry standard technology platform that would be easily maintained.

One of the primary drivers behind this was that Genesis' 530 computer users were affected by slow login and start-up times, with each activity taking approximately one to one-and-a-half minutes, and even longer if there were updates in progress.

Genesis Energy also had difficulty building new desktops and laptops outside of the two main sites, Greenlane and Huntly, which the company wanted to resolve through the technology upgrade.

"With such a significant technology update of both the back-end infrastructure and desktop environment, it is vital that our users were comfortable with the pending technology update," says Marie Boyle, Technology Manager for Genesis Energy.

"Initially, Gen-i undertook a period of discovery and verification to make sure they were aware of, and addressed, any information gaps. This included information about any specialised applications and configurations users may have," adds Boyle.

## Solution

The solution comprises Microsoft Systems Management Server 2003, Windows XP, Office 2003 and WISE Packaging Studio for enterprise application management and integration.

"We integrated over 100 applications, investigated approximately 300 and rolled-out over 100 core business applications. Our investigations involved ensuring applications across all users' desktops would be available in the upgraded desktop environment," says Andy Chong, Gen-i Senior Project Manager for the Genesis Energy project.

Using Gen-i's certified project management methodology, the project was completed in six months, with the actual rollout comprising only two months of this.

With the implementation involving rebuilding each of the 560 desktops across Genesis' seven sites, it was vital to effectively manage the project using open communication and a structured approach. Using a customised methodology founded on industry best practice, the Gen-i team followed comprehensive phases to implement the Genesis solution. These phases included concept and feasibility, plan and design, build and implement, and verify and close.

## Results

"This was the smoothest desktop upgrade I have ever experienced. Not only were there no issues with the rollout but, multiple existing issues were also seamlessly resolved," was the feedback from one satisfied user.

The deployment successfully met all of Genesis' business objectives and expectations, with the project completed on time and under budget.

"Login and start-up times were reported by pleasantly surprised users as twice as fast and Genesis is now able to build new laptops and computers at all of their sites easily and quickly," says Mr Chong.

"Once the solution design was completed, the Gen-i deployment team lived and breathed this project. We interacted with every one of the 530 users to ensure all the bases were covered, capturing and documenting custom specifications and applications for each user and desktop using a Gen-i deployment toolset."

He adds that reassured and happy end users are central to a successful desktop deployment. With attention to detail, open communication with users, patience and perseverance, Gen-i ensured Genesis staff and its IS department felt secure in the deployment. Here is some more feedback from the end users:

"Just a quick note to let you know that we were pleased with the way the XP upgrade was implemented. The team performed to a very high level, in meeting our needs, and dealing with points of anguish. A top job well done!"

"I would like to express genuine appreciation for how the XP upgrade was handled over the weekend. Gen-i made a special effort to individually roll out the computers with minimal disruption for us all. The actual roll out was professionally and competently accomplished, with little or no issues, no doubt reflecting the prior work before go-live."

## Key Results

- Smooth, pain-free desktop upgrade
- Successfully met all of Genesis Energy's business objectives and expectations
- Project completed on time and under budget
- Significant improvement in login and start-up times now twice as fast
- Reassured, happy end users
- Genesis now able to build new computers at any site easily and quickly

**"The Gen-i project management team took the time to understand the environment and users they were delivering to very well, which is what really enabled this to be such a success," says Marie Boyle, Technology Manager at Genesis Energy.**

## Solution Summary

Through effective project management and partnership with Genesis Energy, Gen-i delivered a smooth transition to a new technology platform.

"Open and effective communications is key to success," says Mr Chong. "We adopted a 'no surprises' approach with Genesis and made sure they were informed of the progress and any possible impact on day-to-day business."

"We informed Genesis staff and their team leaders of possible outages that may affect them and made sure these were kept to a minimum, which was well-received and particularly important to the Huntly site," adds Mr Chong.

This was especially noted at Huntly, one of Genesis Energy's mission critical power station sites, as the Genesis Energy Technology Manager, Marie Boyle, explains:

"I would like to take the opportunity to formally thank the project team for the way the Huntly rollout was handled. This project on the whole has gone very well, but in particular the Huntly rollout has received very positive feedback. In particular, the Gen-i project management team took the time to understand the environment and users they were delivering to very well, which is what really enabled this to be such a success."