

Browsium Competitive Insights Series:

Browsium Ion vs. Windows Terminal Server for IE6 Remediation

Many organizations are considering Browsium Ion or Windows Terminal Server solutions for overcoming IE6 dependencies as they upgrade their client PCs to Windows 7. This brief document highlights some important characteristics of each solution on the dimensions of compatibility, complexity and cost, clearly demonstrating the superiority of Browsium Ion.

Characteristics of Browsium Ion solution

- Browsium Ion is a single-browser solution. Legacy apps run side-by-side with modern apps in a modern browser.
- Ion is transparent to end users, with all applications accessed from IE8 or IE9.
- Ion is simple for IT, requiring no servers and no new infrastructure. Ion configurations are deployed to client systems via Group Policy (or any other software distribution solution used by the customer).
- Ion requires a knowledgeable IT technician to assess application compatibility and configure Ion for remediation. This work is typically much easier and less expensive than rewriting or replacing legacy web applications.

Characteristics of Windows Terminal Server solution

- Windows Server 2003 is required to run IE6 or IE7 – those browsers will not run on Windows Server 2008. In an environment where Windows Server 2008 is used for VDI, a parallel Terminal Server farm running Windows Server 2003 would need to be set up to host client access to legacy IE6 and IE7-dependent applications.
- Each Windows Server must be configured as an end user system with access to all configuration settings and software components required to enable legacy applications to run. The binaries for the IE6 browser in Windows Server 2003 are different than the binaries in Windows XP, further complicating compatibility. In addition, Citrix XenApp or Quest vWorkspace are required to deliver a standalone browser solution. This configuration work may be equivalent to or exceed the work to configure Browsium Ion for these same applications.
- Terminal Servers don't solve the problem of side-by-side compatibility, and in reality make them worse. Whether dealing with different apps requiring different versions of Java or different browser settings, IT would need to remediate apps by spreading access across multiple servers, increasing cost and complexity. The end user experience of this becomes a large management problem as they must use completely separate virtual environments for different apps – requiring significant training as well as helpdesk resources.
- Terminal Servers deliver a complex end user experience, even for one legacy app and one modern app, as users must be in a different environment for each app. IE6 on a Terminal Server has different user interface than IE8 and IE9, leading to confusion when running both in parallel. This further complicates training/helpdesk requirements.
- Security and compatibility concerns – once a user is browsing with IE6 on Terminal Server, it is difficult to get the user to switch back to modern browser for access to other apps. Browsing the web in IE6 is a security risk. Accessing modern line-of-business applications in IE6 is a compatibility risk. Additional infrastructure and resources are needed to manage this environment to mitigate these security and compatibility concerns.
- Windows Server 2003 support ends in July 2015, with support for other components, including XenApp for Windows Server 2003, ending sooner. This transfers one end-of-support problem directly to another.
- Windows Server 2003 Terminal Services w/XenApp doesn't scale well, with a large memory footprint per user limiting the number of users per server. Many organizations [can't support even 50 concurrent users](#).
- Even at 100 users per server (which may not be possible), 1,000 servers will be required to support 100,000 users.
- Server hardware plus software licenses can easily exceed \$200/user.
- Yearly maintenance cost of server hardware will easily exceed cost of Browsium Ion licenses each year.