

# Case Study

## Financial Services

### Stratodesk Helps Firstmark Credit Union Enhance Remote Workforce Security and Productivity

[www.firstmarkcu.org](http://www.firstmarkcu.org)



#### Summary

In 1932, Firstmark Credit Union started as the San Antonio Teachers Credit Union to service the needs of educators in the city.

Customer Since 2020

#### Environment

- 250 desktops
- 100 laptops
- Endpoints with multiple peripheral types including headsets, ID scanners, signature pads, and PIN pads

#### Challenge

- Improve endpoint security with SSO and MFA integrations
- Implement a VDI solution to simplify employee access to resources
- Standardize Windows and application deployments across multiple hardware models for hundreds of employees

#### Solution

Deploy Stratodesk NoTouch to power VMware Horizon and VMware True SSO solutions

#### Benefits

- Reduce endpoint update time from weeks to minutes, slashing system imaging time by 75% and troubleshooting time by 95%
- Ease of image standardization, agnostic to hardware
- Extend the investment in existing hardware by converting into modern endpoints installed with Stratodesk NoTouch OS
- Estimated 67% savings on hardware with no need for extended deployment times thanks to a simplified out-of-box experience

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Easy Migration to Secure Virtual Desktops with SSO and MFA

Based on its slogan, “Smart. Simple. Secure,” you can believe Firstmark, the oldest state-chartered credit union in San Antonio, Texas, wants nothing more than to help its members and employees grow and prosper, while protecting their valuable information and assets.

Firstmark wanted to scale operations. The credit union had to find a technology partner capable of providing efficient endpoint management that could support its ever-increasing remote workforce, spurred on by COVID. To support its far-flung staff, the business needed to be more efficient in managing the IT infrastructure, especially the hardware used by the ever-increasing amount of remote employees.

Rather than continue with inconsistent hardware deployments, the IT team made the switch to VMware Horizon VDI protected by True SSO for single sign-on and multi-factor authentication (MFA), integrated with Stratodesk NoTouch OS. The Stratodesk endpoint OS has become foundational to the credit union’s centrally managed end-user computing (EUC) platform.

With Stratodesk as its strategic EUC partner, Firstmark no longer worries whether employee productivity and thin client security fit the business strategy, so it can better focus on helping members live out the highest vision for themselves.

[www.stratodesk.com](http://www.stratodesk.com)

*“As a billion-dollar financial services company, we take productivity and security seriously. By working with Stratodesk to centralize testing and avoid managing multiple platforms, we can simplify our entire EUC infrastructure with consistent controls to save time and money.”*

**-Aaron Bedingfield, CTO of Firstmark Credit Union**

## CHALLENGES

### 3 Weeks Required to Update Physical Windows PCs

***Firstmark wanted to improve end-point security and simplify employee access to internal resources with a new single SSO and MFA solution. Simultaneously, the company was in the midst of a VDI migration and standardizing their endpoint hardware and software deployments. The IT team, led by CTO Aaron Bedingfield, with support from IT Services Director Matt Stiefer and Senior Systems Administrator Craig Jones, needed a flexible partner that could help them easily deploy and manage highly secure, reliable endpoints throughout their distributed organization.***

Bedingfield's team searched for an alternative to managing physical PCs and their peripherals for hundreds of employees. The credit union required branch employees to connect a range of digital devices to their computers, from customer signature pads to scanners that could quickly process checks, identification, and secure PINs. The IT team was sinking an enormous amount of time into device updates. With dozens of versions of device drivers and firmware to manage, it would take the team up to three weeks every time they needed to update their fleet of Windows PCs, applications, and device drivers.

As the company grew, it needed agility to support employees at all sites and remote locations. Consequently, their endpoints had to be easy to administer while working seamlessly with the SSO and MFA benefits that came with Firstmark's VMware Horizon True SSO implementation. Firstmark's leadership wanted to scale the organization with a consistent hardware footprint, without having to add headcount to the IT team or overburden Stiefer and Jones just to manage the shifting environment.

## SOLUTION

### Best-in-class Support to Implement VMware Horizon True SSO

The credit union first evaluated several "edge OS" vendors at the recommendation of its service provider. However, these OS alternatives were deemed under-featured or too complicated; one solution required agents to be installed on every endpoint and managed by dual physical servers, which added cost and complexity. Both a deal-breaker for Jones and the IT team.

Jones ultimately selected Stratodesk for its ease of management, simplicity, and flexibility. It was clear to all from the start that the Stratodesk NoTouch OS interface was more intuitive than others. Jones could easily and quickly convert existing endpoints to Linux-based, secure Stratodesk NoTouch OS running the VMware Horizon client. He also had the freedom to deploy the Stratodesk-based endpoints locally or over the network. As a result, Stratodesk NoTouch OS runs on every thin client, regardless of make or model, and the administrator can configure and control each client from a single Stratodesk NoTouch Center dashboard.

The Stratodesk and Firstmark teams also worked hand-in-hand to test and configure Stratodesk NoTouch to work smoothly with VMware's True SSO solution. It took only a few weeks for the successful deployment of True SSO, enabling Firstmark to deliver enterprise-grade user authentication with a rich consumer-like experience. End-to-end, from initial proof-of-concept to implementation process, Stratodesk delivered superior support, resolving every question or issue quickly.

"Flexibility and agility from both teams made it possible to hunker down and complete the VDI and SSO project successfully," said Craig Jones, Senior Systems Administrator, Firstmark Credit Union. "Before Stratodesk, I had never before had that experience of attentiveness being applied rigorously until the solution works. Kudos to everyone."

## BENEFITS

### Slashing Management Time by 95% and Hardware Costs by 67%

With the deployment of Stratodesk well under way, Firstmark has already seen significant ROI. Instead of taking two to three weeks of staff time to update the physical Windows OS, applications, and device drivers, the team can now manage just one master image. The credit union no longer has to juggle multiple versions of Windows or device drivers to its myriad peripherals. Prior to deploying Stratodesk NoTouch OS in the VMware Horizon VDI environment, it would take up to 6 hours to update, test, and hand off physical workstations with all peripherals at a single financial center.

Thanks to Stratodesk NoTouch OS, Firstmark's four-person EUC team can cut the system imaging time by 75% and troubleshooting time by 95%. They no longer waste time determining the specification and version of each software component or having to create patch and update plans for different configurations within their endpoint fleet. Now, if they need to implement a security update or roll out new software features on the day they become available, it just takes a few clicks of the mouse.

Besides admin time, Firstmark also saves money on hardware costs. Firstmark estimates it will save 67% on hardware costs by the time it completes the VDI migration. The IT team can extend their hardware investments by converting them into modern endpoints installed with Stratodesk NoTouch OS. With the simplified out-of-box experience for the end user and the IT admin, Firstmark doesn't have to dump hours into getting users up and running, rather, just minutes.

*"Stratodesk NoTouch OS has been a secret weapon for repurposing our hardware footprint. Transitioning from Windows endpoints to Stratodesk allows us to use a mix of hardware but keep every setting and OS exactly the same. That saves us a ton of time on troubleshooting. We now know exactly what each configuration is and no longer have to waste time on repetitive, manual tasks."*

**– Craig Jones, Senior Systems Administrator,  
Firstmark Credit Union**

## CONCLUSION

### Increasing Agility for Business Initiatives and Richer User Experience

For Firstmark, modernizing the EUC environment to deliver a consistent, rich experience for end-users and IT alike has been a fundamental change. Moving the credit union employees' physical workstations to Stratodesk has made the business much more agile, now able to shift employees and resources around its locations as needed. The partnership with Stratodesk has allowed Firstmark to accelerate its digital transformation initiatives and deliver a uniquely standardized experience for its distributed workforce. The partnership with Stratodesk has provided opportunities for the IT team to deliver faster and higher quality service to its locations and remote employees.

*"As we grow, Stratodesk allows us to be more efficient in IT and to ensure a great experience for everyone involved. It doesn't matter who you are or where you are located, you'll have the same exact experience thanks to the flexibility, reliability, and simplicity of NoTouch OS."*

**– Matt Stiefer, Director of IT Services, Firstmark Credit Union**