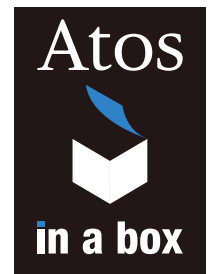




Workplace



E-mail

Workplace in a box



FLEVOLAND SAFETY REGION

An airplane crash. An explosion. An earthquake or terrorist attack. Disasters are not the most pleasant topics to ponder, but it's a good thing the safety regions do just that. In this way, victims are always guaranteed to receive the help they need. The Flevoland Safety Region, established in 2008, hopes to deal predominantly with this core issue. The IT department sought out a ready-made solution that would minimise concerns about management and availability but was flexible enough to adapt to specific needs. The solution: Atos in a box.

Workplace in a box

It offers assistance to victims and questions the nature and cause of a disaster as quickly and efficiently as possible. This is carried out in cooperation with the various rescue services including fire, ambulance and police, and is what the Flevoland Safety Region stands for. Issues pertaining to IT should ideally be kept to a minimum. "It should just work," says controller Wim Maas. "Always and everywhere, even in a command vehicle for example."

To ensure the safety of the Netherlands during a crisis or disaster, it was decided to introduce safety regions. These regions will prepare for disasters and coordinate victim support. At the start of 2008, the Flevoland Safety Region was launched. The local municipality, fire department, Public Health Service, ambulance service and police are all collaborating in this effort. Other organisations, such as the water control boards, the Ministry of Defence, the Public Works Department and the Red Cross also have an interest in this cooperation. For the fire department, the creation of this safety region has had additional organisational consequences. Six local municipal corps have joined the Flevoland Fire Department.

No server administration

In preparation for organisational integration, IT began searching for a solution in 2007. The principles included: an integrated system with minimal overhead and the lowest possible costs plus the ability to work remotely. "We aren't fighting

fires with computers," says Wim Maas, head of operations of the Flevoland Fire Department and safety region controller. "But we increasingly rely on our IT. It must therefore be well organised." The Flevoland Safety Region has already been in contact with Atos Origin via the city of Almere. "We heard about Atos in a box from them. No server administration, no infrastructure maintenance and a virus-free work environment with the latest software versions, always," says Maas. "That was like music to our ears. Atos Origin was prepared to guide us through the process of transitioning to Atos in a box and offered us specific modifications."

Permanent contact person

Yet there was also scepticism in the beginning, says Maas. "With some merger partners, IT was controlled by the municipal organization. They claimed they would always be worse off with a standard solution. It's partly for this reason that satisfaction has been unanimously high. The design of the Atos in a box environment; the layout; the processing of information; the initial start-up and the specific, customised adjustments all have gone smoothly. We have a permanent contact person at Atos that we can get in touch with for anything. With many of the similar solutions, this is not possible. You would have to email them or call the central helpdesk."

Home email access

The Workplace in a box and its corresponding Email in a box environment has 160 users. After starting their computer, they connect to an external desktop, on which all of the common office applications are made available. Select users also able to access specific applications, such as the management system, PO system, or the system with instructions for operational tasks. The external desktop is accessible using any internet connection. "This is a huge

advantage," says Maas, "because we are also becoming more mobile. In the case of a larger incident, for example, a command vehicle can arrive fairly quickly. With Atos in a box we can easily offer advice, adjust plans and inform the press, all using a laptop and dongle. We are also seeing that home and work are becoming increasingly intertwined. People like being able to check their email at home or occasionally finish a project from the comfort of their own home. Now, that's possible."

Adjustments

The costs of Atos in a box have been specifically adjusted for the safety region. The work is carried out in shifts, whereby some places have up to three users. This makes using Atos even more affordable. For the 450 members of the volunteer fire department, a 'light' Email in a box solution was introduced. "We now have one email extension which streamlines communication. Each volunteer has their own webmail and no longer needs to use their private email address. Combining this webmail with private email is also an option."

The right decision

Wim Maas is very satisfied with the collaboration between Atos in a box and Atos Origin. "It was strange when the servers were removed and there was nothing to replace them. But we made the right decision. We only have two internal employees responsible for IT matters. They spend only a small portion of their day updating the administration menu. There are no other IT issues to worry about. We're also happy with the costs—we now save 20% compared to traditional IT environments."



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TRADITIONAL IT ENVIRONMENTS**

WIM MAAS, CONTROLLER OF THE FLEVOLAND SAFETY REGION

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