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Major European Gas Transit Operator Chooses Matrox Extio 3 KVM Extenders for New Dispatching & Monitoring Systems

Matrox Extio 3 IP KVM extenders allow Belgium-based Fluxys to centralize noise and heat-emitting computers to a secure data center and improve dispatcher productivity

Image courtesy: Fluxys

Fluxys chooses Matrox Extio 3 IP KVM extenders for upgrading their natural gas dispatching front-end systems.

Matrox Extio 3
IP KVM extenders

"Our IT staff are pleased with the final, delocalized setup, while dispatchers enjoy a decluttered, streamlined workspace with increased comfort, ergonomics, and productivity."

Tim Deleeuw
Project manager at Fluxys

In Belgium, Fluxys is responsible for the operation and maintenance of high-pressure pipelines, the gas storage site in Loenhout, and the liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Zeebrugge. Each day, the dispatchers at Fluxys oversee 4,000 kilometers of high-pressure gas pipelines. To provide the best work environment for their dispatchers, Fluxys decided to renew the front-end of their dispatching system entirely.

Swift decision

Fluxys' control room featured a less-than-optimal workspace. Most computer systems were placed in the control room, next to each dispatcher's desk, producing a lot of heat and noise and cluttering their workspace. Fluxys wanted to revamp the control room and shift all the computer systems into the data center. This is where they took an opportunity to explore the latest KVM extender offerings as well. "Having had great experiences with the Matrox Extio 2 Series KVM extenders, our decision to select the Matrox Extio 3 Series IP KVM extenders was an easy one," recalls Tim Deleeuw, project manager at Fluxys. "Extio 3 Series features the familiar industry-leading KVM extension performance, feature set, and reliability that we were looking for, while offering support for the latest Windows® operating system. The transition was seamless."

Centralization of assets

All the computers that were once found at each dispatcher desk have now been moved one floor below the control room, at distances between 50 to 100 meters (164 to 328 feet), to a secure and heat-and-noise-controlled data center. Each computer is connected to an Extio 3 N3408 transmitter, and all signals are extended over a single fiber optic cable to the dispatcher's desk where the quiet and compact Extio 3 N3408 receiver appliance powers the keyboard, mouse, and four DisplayPort screens. Fluxys is in a good position to transition smoothly from its current point-to-point to a networked configuration in the near future, as Extio 3 readily supports both types of configurations.

Matrox Extio 3 IP KVM extenders are integral to the centralization of assets at Fluxys.

Matrox technology helps Fluxys to oversee thousands of kilometers of high-pressure natural gas pipelines network.

New delocalized setup

At the company headquarters in Brussels, every dispatcher desktop (six of them) is now equipped with two Extio 3 N3408 receiver units to support eight screens displaying data from three types of systems. For making nominations to clients who buy natural gas or liquefied natural gas from Fluxys or store them, the dispatchers use a gas flow application called GSmart. The second is a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) application portraying the real-time gas flow environment of high-pressure pipelines. The third is ASTRID, a system that manages the voice and data communication network for all emergency and security services in Belgium. Extio 3 flawlessly extends all signals and provides seamless remote desktop to the dispatchers for these time-critical applications.

High availability of systems is also important for Fluxys' dispatching operations. To this end, Fluxys has set up a back-up center. In this location, the dispatcher clients and Extio 3 units are deployed in an exact replica of the setup at the Fluxys headquarters. Should something happen to the primary systems, this disaster recovery setup allows the dispatchers to shift to the back-up center and resume operations.

Transmitted benefits

The impact and advantages of deploying Extio 3 are manifold—to the company as a whole, the dispatchers, and the IT staff as well. "The Extio 3 IP KVM extender standalone appliances were straightforward to install and proved their stability," says Tim Deleeuw. "Our IT staff are pleased with the final, delocalized setup, while dispatchers enjoy a decluttered, streamlined workspace with increased comfort, ergonomics, and productivity."

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