



## Tranxition Optimizes the User Face of IT Systems

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### Management Summary

The employees of a business are some of its most valuable assets. While IT may process the transactions and support business processes, it is the human side of the business that, for the most part, makes transactions happen, and it is their use of technology that drives the business. The value people derive from IT investments is all in the eye of the beholder – in what they see and in what they can do. This value is enhanced by the way users customize their environments to do their jobs better. Tranxition calls this a *personality*. This personality includes amendments to the spell check dictionary, bookmarks, printer and keyboard mappings, address books, local files, and many other adjustments that occur as desktop applications are used. When technology is refreshed, this personality must not just be persisted, but also must be mapped to the new norms of the target environment (operating systems, application versions, and/or hardware enhancements).

Most of these employees – and all of the valuable ones – will outlast a turn of technology. While technology hardware has gotten cheaper and cheaper, the costs and pain of migrating users to new hardware, new operating systems, or new versions of applications has not. A move to managed desktop environments might seem to address the problem, but it merely changes out the relevant hardware from a thousand physical endpoints to a thousand guests on a few servers. The challenge of desktop management – and migration – remains. The indirection of virtualization adds another layer of complexity. If the personality is not aggregated and protected, it can be scattered across many layers and locations – and thus is difficult to migrate.

Centralization can extend the lifecycle of desktops since they are used only to display and do not show their age (unless you are looking at a CR screen), but most servers have a three-year refresh cycle. This short cycle is due to improvements in chip technology, reductions in energy draw, maintenance costs, software licensing, and the economics of owned-and-depreciated or leased equipment. Wherever the desktops are instantiated on technology, migrating them, complete with all the customizations that keep a workforce productive, is a substantial endeavor. Tranxition, based in Beaverton, Oregon, has embraced this problem area.

Tranxition's approach is like the method stamp collectors use to remove stamps from envelopes. The trick for keeping the stamp whole is to peel the envelope off the stamp, not vice-versa. IT has always focused on the system, often regarding customization (the stamp in this analogy) as a necessary evil. By focusing on preserving the stamp – separating out the personality – persisting the personality in any transition becomes an overlay of remapping – still complex, but a part of process, not an exception that must be separately addressed. Automotive manufacturers have taken the same approach in customizing things like gearshift knobs, which allows most of the manufacturing process to be standardized and highly automated.

Tranxition makes migration from traditional desktop management to remote management, remote hosting, or virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) easier. For the enterprise, TCO will be both lower and more predictable. IT will have the point of manageability to update its outward face, as business as usual, rather than as an extraordinary act. For more details of how Tranxition accomplishes this, please read on.

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## Who is Tranxition?

Tranxition commenced operations in 1998. It is privately funded and profitable. It holds multiple patents with more pending. The company software has millions of installed seats, but the company itself is relatively unknown, because they work through partners. OEM partners include HP and BMC Software. Service partners include Wyse, Lockheed Martin, and HP.

Tranxition's initial product, *Live Manage*, is software that performed incremental backups and supported the migration of desktop environments. Subsequently *LiveManage for Services* was released for one-time migrations by service organizations. In April 2009, support for physical to virtual migration was added in *Live-Manage for Virtual Migrations*. Each product focused on keeping user personalities<sup>1</sup> intact and properly integrated into the new environment. All products integrate with existing enterprise management frameworks and management tools, but do not manage the same things. Recently, Tranxition offered its partners *Tranxition Migration Studio* to address custom applications<sup>2</sup> and other unusual situations.

With the addition of Tranxition's latest product, *AdaptivePersona*, the user workforce will get an assurance of preference persistence, from any endpoint. This is a significant new capability, and worth exploring in more detail. Its functionality allows many companies to start to think differently about their operational norms.

## What is AdaptivePersona?

AdaptivePersona leverages all the work Tranxition has put into its existing products, and uses two elements developed out of the aggregate Tranxition IP, *Personality Hypervisor* and *Smart Shadow*, to enhance the use experience of enterprise IT systems further.

### *Adaptive Float*

In *AdaptivePersona*, a lightweight agent<sup>3</sup> and a Tranxition server supports a steady feed of changes, based on events and/or a timed cadence, to keep all user profiles updated. This virtualization method is slightly different than the migration-focused process used in *Live-Manage*. It creates an IT system capability

Tranxition calls *dynamic float*.

### *Personality Hypervisor*

The Personality Hypervisor provides a consistent personalized experience as users move to different desktop instances. For doctors and nurses, this may be different desktops in examining rooms. For the mobile worker, this may include borrowed laptops. The Personality Hypervisor monitors systems calls and gathers those users initiate. It does not concern itself with patches – just user-initiated changes that must be backed up to the server and added to the user's personality.

### *SmartShadow*

SmartShadow is the software element that provides the translation that is needed to accommodate to the new venue. It is set up as a Thesaurus that contains all the synonyms needed to translate user particulars into settings that will be understood by different hardware, operating system, and application versions.

### *Use Cases for AdaptivePersona*

In the initial release, each user is limited to one personality. The initial use case for AdaptivePersona is desktop virtualization. The Use of AdaptivePersona can reduce the number of Virtual Machine images that must be kept. Because of the high growth rate of virtualization, this is an obvious first target.

The next use case will be Desktop Management and Migration. With up-to-date personalities, migration and backup can be less complex processes. In the future, Tranxition looks to support Client-based PC Virtualization, allowing multiple client operating systems to be used locally (via PC virtualization) as desired.

There is also a use case for people who need more than one personality. An example might be a company lawyer who wishes to segregate clearly what s/he does when working on case A from what s/he does when working on case B. Another case might be an engineer who, as part of his job, contributes to industry standards committees. Version one of AdaptivePersona has support for just one persona per *Windows* log-on but customers are already asking for more.

With AdaptivePersona, Tranxition is stepping out from the shadow of the partnerships by which they have traditionally delivered products. It is making a case both with enterprises and with their IT staff, who see reductions in OPEX and support calls, and a quick recovery –

<sup>1</sup> These personalities can include over 10,000 elements

<sup>2</sup> RIAs (rich internet applications) and Mash-ups would be considered unique applications.

<sup>3</sup> Tranxition has a proof of concept in progress to deploy its agent on a secure memory stick/thumb drive.

usually one month – of software costs.

AdaptivePersona will go to market with two models.

- **The Foundation model** will support a reliable user personality profile. Pricing, which includes first year maintenance and support, is \$24-33 per user. Its unit price is less when licensed per named user and more when licensed per concurrent user.
- **The Advanced model** also includes Live-Manage for Virtual Migrations and a Smart-Shadow Thesaurus. Pricing follows the same model as the Foundation product and ranges from \$29 to 34 per user.

### *Competing Approaches*

Many other competing approaches address the problem at the application layer. Tranxition stays out of the application and OS space, capturing only user-initiated elements.

#### Application-based User Management

With traditional thin client applications, such as Citrix and others, users can interact remotely with an application that resides on a central server, or the central server streams the application (or bits of it) to the local endpoint for local interactions. Neither option fosters easy extraction of personality elements.

#### Image-Based User Management

The image-based approach to end-user customization is more compatible with Tranxition's software, as personalities can be applied to images, though any lack of discipline in applying personalities to clone variants, rather than the golden images that act as templates, may contaminate the personality in unexpected ways.

### **In Pursuit of Persistence**

Migration is a fact of life for most business systems. Use of open source elements where the cadence of change is more frequent and use of mash-ups and short-lived situational applets demands a more pro-active approach to capturing personality elements that must be persisted. This persistence is needed in situational recovery as well as in disaster recovery. When there is an operational failure of any extent, end-user environments must be instantly recoverable in their full customization and up-to-date configurations.

With AdaptivePersona, IT staff can preserve a user's desktop personality completely, simply, and cost-effectively. Because user

personalities are less broad in scope than images and are not intermingled with application or operating systems (just the settings, please), they can reduce the OPEX for desktop management by simplifying migration – and by creating a clearer delineation between application and desktop support.

AdaptivePersona also expands the appropriateness of virtual clients of many types. While Tranxition is focused at this time on the desktop dilemma, those enterprises with multiple partner portals and custom interfaces for valuable customers may see a long tail of other kinds of potential usefulness for the Tranxition approach. There is a growing need for the kind of manageability and persistence of real-time changes that Tranxition supplies.

### **Conclusion**

Business is built on process but enabled by people – buyers, sellers, arbitrators, such as wholesalers, resellers and consultants, and support staffs of all of the above. Business falters when it is not done well. Tranxition supports the intelligence of business employees by persisting their workspace personality. Anything else would be uncivilized.



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