



NHS Tayside cuts IT support costs and medical staff downtime

THE SOLUTION

Altiris® Client Management Suite™

ABOUT NHS TAYSIDE

NHS Tayside is responsible for meeting the health needs of more than 388,780 people living in Tayside. NHS Tayside employs approximately 14,000 staff and provides a comprehensive range of primary, community-based and acute hospital services for the populations of Dundee City, Angus and Perth & Kinross. Acute services are also provided by Ninewells Hospital and Medical School to the population of North East Fife. Its annual budget is now over £750 million of public money which works out at around £2 million spent by NHS Tayside for every day of the year.

CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

- > By remotely troubleshooting PCs, the IT team has reduced user downtime, allowing the staff at NHS Tayside to devote more time to patient care.
- > The IT team has cut IT support costs and saved energy by remotely switching off PCs not in use.
- > Altiris Client Management Suite from Symantec has enabled the IT team to combat the threat of viruses to its extensive network by automatically patching over 7,000 PCs.

NHS Tayside employs approximately 14,000 staff and provides primary, community-based and acute hospital services for more than 388,780 people. In order for its medical staff to concentrate on treating patients, it is critical that PC downtime is low and that its IT infrastructure runs smoothly on a daily basis. Entrusted with an annual budget of over £750 million of public money, it is essential for the organisation to keep costs to a minimum.

SEEKING AN OVERVIEW

Paul Tovey, head of IT service delivery at NHS Tayside, sets the scene:

“In 2005, following a reorganisation, our department was tasked with managing all desktop services across NHS Tayside. We support over 100 sites across Dundee City, Angus and Perth & Kinross which are connected to the same network. We were spending a huge amount of time on the road travelling between hospitals manually fixing problems with employees’ desktops. We were also finding it difficult to manage and prioritise the flood of calls coming into the helpdesk from users with IT problems. In addition, builds were not consistent across the different areas. We wanted to take full control of our estate, know what IT assets we owned and how to measure and record them. We also wanted to standardise our desktop and regulate our desktop OS patching regime, to know what the build was, how it was patched and apply patches remotely. We could see that the potential for IT efficiency was there but we did not have the tools to deliver such efficiencies.”

Tovey was frustrated with the lack of a comprehensive overview of NHS Tayside’s IT assets. Without knowing how many PCs and software applications the organisation owned, it was becoming tricky to make strategic IT decisions such as future migration projects.

“We needed a solution to help us effectively manage our enterprise and provide an accurate and comprehensive inventory of our hardware and software assets. This in turn would help us manage desktops and deploy packages in a consistent manner.” Tovey decided he needed a fully integrated systems management tool which would give him improved control of the organisation’s IT infrastructure. Following a thorough assessment of current systems management tools on the market, Tovey opted to implement a Symantec solution with 5,419 licences of the Altiris Client Management Suite (level 1) to cover the entire estate. This combines asset management, remote management and patch management into a single web-based console. Tovey selected the Symantec solution as it easily manages a heterogeneous environment of clients and servers, offers a combination of fully integrated solutions and was considered value for money. With full support from Symantec, the software was implemented within six months

TROUBLE SHOOTING

The team quickly started to see the benefits of the solution, in particular the intuitive management interface with real-time dashboards which enabled them to remotely fix PC problems.

“The implementation of Altiris Client Management Suite has greatly reduced the amount of time our IT team needs to spend on the road,” says Tovey. “They can remotely fix the majority of users’ problems without even leaving their desks. This significantly reduces time spent travelling and user downtime. With cutting IT support costs at the forefront of the team’s objectives, the team has also been using Altiris Client Management Suite to remotely power down PCs when they are not in use, contributing to a reduction in the organisation’s electricity bills.”

ABOUT ALTIRIS

Altiris, Inc. is a leading provider of service-oriented management software that enables IT organisations to easily manage, secure and service heterogeneous IT assets. Flexible solutions from Altiris help IT align services to drive business objectives, deliver audit-ready security, automate tasks, and reduce the cost and complexity of management. For more information, visit www.altiris.com.

PATCHING PROBLEMS

Tovey has also been using Altiris Client Management Suite as part of the team's patch management strategy. Prior to the implementation, his team were physically visiting each PC to install updates. Now the team use the tools to gather information by automatically scanning and reporting on the organisation's computers. Once required patches are identified, distribution wizards provide automated package and policy creation for easy and secure distribution of all patches and updates. "Not only does the tool identify which PCs need patching, it prioritises the patch by severity of vulnerability. From this, it automatically deploys the patches eliminating the need for us to physically visit each PC. The tool has accelerated our security process by reducing the need for extended patch test cycles," comments Tovey.

IMPROVING ASSET MANAGEMENT

NHS Tayside has also just purchased the Altiris Asset Management Suite to manage its IT assets. The tool will provide the team with a clearer picture of its enterprise, showing how many PCs and software applications the organisation owns and more importantly, how they relate to the services that are deployed across the organisation. The team intend to use Asset Management to record in one place, hardware and software assets, services, contacts and contracts.

The solution is also helping the IT team to plan future migration projects:

"Because we have a comprehensive overview of our PCs we are able to calculate which ones are suitable for upgrades. We can also estimate the potential costs to the organisation of upgrading OS or versions of software. For example, when we look to migrate to Windows Vista we will use this tool to estimate how much the project will cost and build this into our budgets," concludes Tovey.