

NETWORK MONITORING THE PERFECT IT REMEDY

Background

Jonathan Smith, an IT specialist with over 15 years' experience in installing and operating SolarWinds products, worked to improve Network Management capability at a local not-for-profit organisation and primary health care agency in New South Wales. The agency, established in 2012 through the amalgamation of several area health organisations, focuses on finding local solutions to local health care challenges, driving health reform, fostering strategic partnerships and delivering quality, innovative, accessible and affordable services. With the goal of keeping residents healthy and out of the hospital, the agency works to improve communications between major hospitals, general practitioners, pharmacies and other health groups. It also assists in providing medical clinics – filling in the gaps for smaller health organisations that do not have the resources or buying power of larger entities.

Empowering an Internal IT Team

Smith, one of the Helpdesk technicians helped guide the organisation as it evaluated new potential network providers. It was looking for a service provider that would offer effective network management and monitoring and help fine tune devices and resources for optimum performance. "We needed network visibility across Cisco devices as well as the monitoring of WAN performance to ensure we were achieving maximum efficiency across a large geographic region. The organisation was reviewing options for third-party providers, but with my prior experience working in several not-for-profit environments, I knew that with the right tools, this could be achieved internally in a cost-effective way," explained Smith.

Smith recommended the organisation use SolarWinds' solutions, including Network Performance Monitor (NPM), Network Configuration Monitor (NCM) and Engineer's Toolset. Having successfully deployed SolarWinds within several other not-for-profit and commercial organisations, he knew that effectively monitoring the network would not only improve performance, but also have a direct impact on the organisation's bottom line. In fact, the organisation discovered that using SolarWinds to internally manage the IT network would require a third of the cost of implementing a third party supplier.



CASE STUDY

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HEALTHCARE DELIVERY: LOCAL AT A GLANCE

- Targeted implementation, a non-for-profit healthcare agency, comprised of six member organisations
- Serving a population of 516,000 residents across a geographic region of nearly 36,000 square kilometres
- Facilitates more than 47,000 health-related appointments, services and programs
- More than 160 employees

Removing the Guesswork from IT

Taking less than an hour to install and configure, the Network Monitoring solution's built-in network discovery automatically identified devices and allowed the team to choose the specific devices they needed to monitor. The simplicity also extended to the solution's customisable web console, which allows Smith and the other technicians to monitor the network from any location. "The summary page gives us a high-level overview of our network and uses simple colour coding to help the team quickly identify any issues. Being able to filter and customise almost every aspect of the solution ensures that we see exactly what we need to know without being inundated with unnecessary information," added Smith.

Smith also noted that SolarWinds' simple licensing policy sets the company apart from its competitors. The ability to fully test and configure solutions before purchasing and to activate the license once established resulted in a quicker and more efficient deployment. "With other monitoring software, you often find that you have to reinvent the wheel once it has been set up and tested. Once we decided to purchase, we knew that our monitoring environment would be ready and waiting, exactly the way we had customised," said Smith.

Smith found the most significant improvement to be the time savings in troubleshooting and resolving IT network issues. With dashboards that provide real-time oversight and at-a-glance performance monitoring, the Helpdesk team can speed up troubleshooting, quickly resolve network outages and reduce downtime. "NPM dramatically cuts down our response time. Problems that used to take hours or even days to identify and resolve now typically only take a few minutes," explained Smith. "SolarWinds takes the guesswork out of our troubleshooting, allowing our team to focus on adding value instead of putting out fires."

Having a customised, intuitive monitoring system has also improved the day-to-day functionality of the wider administrative staff. The user-friendly dashboards allow employees outside of the IT department to relay important information in the event of an IT issue. "The organisation is driven by the needs of our community, therefore it is fitting that its IT services take into account the needs of its internal staff. SolarWinds empowers the staff to assist in resolving any issues and reduces miscommunication between departments," said Smith. "Employees no longer have to suffer through a long IT resolution process and can focus on the business task at hand while the dashboard offers us a clear picture of what to fix," he explained."

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Delivering Unexpected Benefits

The team also discovered that NPM's ability to collect detailed information can guide proactive troubleshooting, allowing them to easily diagnose new issues they might not otherwise spot. "The monitoring tool led us to identify that certain models of printers within our network were running out of system memory and cutting off during large printing jobs. What would have been a frustrating issue for our staff was quickly identified and alleviated and we would not have come to the solution so easily without SolarWinds constantly monitoring key components of our network," said Smith.

Having realised the benefits of utilising SolarWinds' solutions to monitor its networks, the organisation is looking to add new features to support continued growth. Smith says it is interested in moving to a VoIP phone system and that they will ensure that SolarWinds' tools manage the configuration of network equipment and WAN infrastructure and monitor the quality of calls. Smith adds that the team would also like to begin monitoring the organisation's servers and applications. Armed with solutions that help its IT department save valuable time and resources, the organisation is well-positioned to continue providing important medical services and improving its offerings within the local health care system.

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ABOUT SOLARWINDS

SolarWinds (NYSE: SWI) provides powerful and affordable IT management software to customers worldwide from Fortune 500 enterprises to small businesses. In all of our market areas, our approach is consistent. We focus exclusively on IT Pros and strive to eliminate the complexity that they have been forced to accept from traditional enterprise software vendors. SolarWinds delivers on this commitment with unexpected simplicity through products that are easy to find, buy, use and maintain while providing the power to address any IT management problem on any scale. Our solutions are rooted in our deep connection to our user base, which interacts in our online community, thwack, to solve problems, share technology and best practices, and directly participate in our product development process. Learn more today at www.solarwinds.com.

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