

Terminix® Service, Inc. improves 3rd party patch management & saves time with Patch Manager

Terminix Service, Inc., an independent franchise of Terminix International Company, L.P., is one of the largest pest control company based in the Carolinas and among the top 10 Terminix franchises in the country. Terminix Service, Inc, with its corporate office in Columbia, SC, operates 53 branch locations and serves more than 200,000 customers in the operational areas of South Carolina, western North Carolina and the CSRA area of eastern Georgia.

IT Management Challenge

Terminix Service, Inc. has grown to an environment of 70 servers dedicated to serving 1100 employees, 55 remote locations and all online processing. With such dramatic growth, the company was looking for centralized endpoint security solutions, specifically antivirus, and a **centralized Windows® update solution**. When Jay Harper, an IT Network Administrator, began this project, the goal was to resolve some of the update and patching challenges that existed at that time.

- There was no means of testing, integrating and tracking updates to third party applications. For example, during the proliferation of the ZeuS botnet, several software packages needed to have their Javascript functionality reconfigured. For each application, the patch was placed in the login script. Login scripts vary depending on the classification of user, so the process took around four hours to set up all patches, run them against test accounts and then deploy the changes across the enterprise
- Change management proved to be a challenge in keeping track of which applications were updated, which ones remained and the individual details/quirks around supporting each app
- With the growing complexity of multiple operating systems, standard and in-house applications, maintaining the IT infrastructure diverted resources best suited for other tasks and responsibilities. The focus needed to turn more towards proactive growth to support increased user demands and evolving technologies

CLIENT STATISTICS

3 IT staff supporting
1100 people and 55
remote locations

70 servers – using
VMware® ESX® Server

Applications patched
with Patch Manager:
Java®, Flash, Reader®,
Firefox®, Chrome™,
iTunes®, Dell® BIOS,
Microsoft Apps,
ShoreTel® Call
Manager, McAfee®
VirusScan® Enterprise,
Malwarebytes®

“It used to take four hours per patch for packaging and testing and about a week to deploy each patch,” said Jay. “Now with Patch Manager, it takes an hour tops - It is incredible.”

- Jay Harper - IT Network Administrator, Terminix Service, Inc.

Terminix Service, Inc. selects SolarWinds® Patch Manager over Secunia

The company needed a reliable **patch management solution** with a robust reporting capability to deploy third party updates. They evaluated three products: Secunia CSI, Microsoft® Systems Center Essentials and SolarWinds Patch Manager. Evaluation of Patch Manager came as a result of positive and helpful interaction with Lawrence Garvin (Product Manager at SolarWinds) in the Microsoft support forums. Patch Manager proved to be more advantageous in that it combined standard Windows® updates, direct third party application patching and a wide breadth of reporting and change management functionality.

"The other products provided basic third party patching in addition to WSUS, but none of them had the ability to drill down and extract the kind of system data and history that we needed to help us move forward," Jay said.

Results and a Look Ahead

After installing and using **SolarWinds Patch Manager** for two years, Terminix Service, Inc. has realized the following benefits:

- An overall reduction in the patching process from weeks to just a couple of hours per patch for deploying updates to all endpoints in the environment
- Improved reporting to keep track of system updates, resource information (drive space, RAM usage, etc.), change management histories and software/hardware inventorying
- Reduced network downtime and errors thanks to *planning mode*, a Patch Manager feature that lets you simulate an update task to catch any issues ahead of time
- Maintaining security best practices such as Windows 7 Limited User while still being able to update and maintain these machines. Previous attempts with scripting sometimes required temporary changes in user security

The screenshot shows the SolarWinds Patch Manager interface. At the top, there's a 'Third Party Updates' section with filters for Approval State, Status, and Classifications. Below this is a table of updates with columns: Title, MSRC Severity, Classification, Arrival Date, Approval, and Declined. The table lists updates for Google Chrome, Adobe Reader, .NET Framework, OrionSDK, WinZip, and My Application. At the bottom, there's a summary dashboard with a pie chart and statistics: Computers installed: 0, Computers with errors: 0, Computers needing: 1, Computers with no status: 0, Computers pending reboot: 0, Computers downloaded: 0, and Computers not applicable: 7.

Title	MSRC Severity	Classification	Arrival Date	Approval	Declined
Google Chrome 15.0.874.121	Unspecified	Tools	11/21/2011 4:43:4...	Not approved	No
Adobe Reader 10.1.1 (Full)	Critical	Security Updates	11/21/2011 4:51:4...	Not approved	Yes
.NET Framework 3.5 Service Pack 1	Important	Service Packs	12/13/2011 10:08...	Approved	No
OrionSDK	Unspecified	Tools	12/16/2011 8:51:0...	Not approved	Yes
WinZip 11.2 (meta data only)	Unspecified	Tools	1/12/2012 1:44:53...	Not approved	No
My Application	Unspecified	Feature Packs	1/19/2012 2:03:15...	Not approved	No

SolarWinds Patch Manager automates the patch management process to help sysadmins & security information engineers protect server, networks & applications against known vulnerabilities, improve application performance and pass patch compliance audits.

"A patch for Adobe® Flash® Player was released this morning. To download the app, add the content to the package, publish and deploy to target machines, it took less than an hour," said Jay Harper, Network Administrator, Terminix Service, Inc. "It is incredible."

Apart from using SolarWinds Patch Manager for deploying patches, the company also found Patch Manager's reports to be information-rich. "To stay on top of things security-wise, we run a lot of reports using Patch Manager" said Jay. "For example, we run a disk space report every day to proactively track some of our older resources where free space is at a premium. One of our current security mandates is to remove 3rd party apps off the servers in order to reduce our attack vector. Using Patch Manager, we ran a report twice a day for two weeks and were able to remotely remove unnecessary applications on 34 servers. This was all done behind the scenes with no downtime or interruption to the user."

Patch Manager can report on service tags for each computer, and provides patch status.

Looking ahead, the company is planning to use Patch Manager to serve as part of a security baseline for machines that are permitted to access their IT infrastructure.

IT Management Inspired by You.

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 <http://www.solarwinds.com>.

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