Intel Integrated Desktop Management Solution Enhances Health Care Delivery
Helix Health System: Customer Application Story

Intel Products At Work

Today's health care industry is shifting toward a new model of patient services called "continuum of care." Health care professionals who have adopted the approach focus on the patient as a whole, drawing from a broad spectrum of information—for example, the hospital, the physician and the lab—to deliver better patient care.

Helix Health System of Baltimore, MD, strongly supports the industry shift. A community based hospital system, Helix is dedicated to the delivery of high-quality, cost-effective, patient-centered care. Because Helix sees Information Services as a vital component of effective health care delivery, the organization strategically deploys tools and technologies that help meet its mission.

"My charge is to make sure that the delivery method—the network and PC—is up and available and efficient and managed," says Paul Brown, director of distributed computing and network operations for Helix. "That's a challenge for any staff, but especially one where you've got 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week coverage."

problem

Managing from a Distance Poses Problems

The toughest challenge for Brown, who oversees more than 40 file servers and 1,500 workstations, is being remote from users. The Helix system includes three hospitals, two nursing homes and a variety of non-profit and for-profit health care-related businesses serving patients within a 30-mile radius of Baltimore. Local NetWare networks within the organization run standard office automation processes such as e-mail, word processing, spreadsheets and calendar scheduling, plus specialized applications, including respiratory care, medical records, social services, emergency room services and

clinical information. An FDDI ring and SMDS (Switched Multi-megabit Data Service) connectors provide WAN links to the hospitals in the Helix system.

The most widely deployed critical application at Helix is a Clinical Information System (CIS) that runs on 450 workstations across two hospitals. CIS must be up 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so that doctors, nurses and other patient care providers, as well as radiology, lab services and respiratory therapy, can access vital patient management data. CIS provides information on admission, discharge and transfers, and lets users place orders and retrieve results.

Because the IS staff is remote from CIS users, however, supporting them proved difficult. In the past, Brown says, someone from IS would have to go to the workstation, insert a disk, and perform inventory and configuration functions hands-on. Today, IS uses Intel's LANDesk™ Manager Software to provide support remotely.

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"LANDesk Manager Software allows us to interact with the user and touch their screen from a distance," Brown says. "We can support them remotely, as well as manage their hardware and software."

Plugging Into a Tiered Management Strategy

Helix's original management strategy involved a layered plan, with the first layer being workstation and file server management; the second layer, infrastructure management, including hubs and routers; and the third layer, enterprise management. To enable that plan, IS needed to find tools that plugged into each layer, but also fed the top layer. Because LANDesk Manager Software offers SNMP links, any information that the software pulls from workstations, such as asset management, can be fed through a master Novell NMS console and on up to Helix's IBM NetView 6000 enterprise management application.

"LANDesk™ Management Suite is a strong integrated application that fits in with other network management platforms…"

"We're in the process of making our people and networks one organization," Brown says. "LANDesk Manager Software facilitates that, because we have essentially one view of the entity. That consistency across LANs and the WAN will make support and deployment a lot easier."

Brown evaluated several desktop-level management solutions from other vendors before installing LANDesk Manager

Software 1.51 in January 1994. The features that most influenced his choice of Intel were remote control and administration, the ability to install LANDesk Manager Software in any file server on the WAN—and to add any workstation to a group and make it manageable—Novell NMS integration and price.

LANDesk Management Suite 2.0 Offers Higher Level of Control

Brown began beta testing LANDesk Management Suite 2.0 in November of 1994. He likes the way the new task-oriented interface makes it easier to structure management activities around problems and operations.

"It makes it nice to say 'Here's a task that I need to accomplish, and here are the tools to do it,' rather than 'Here's a tool. What can I do with it?'" he explains. "The interface makes it easier to do something, rather than figuring out what I need to use to do something."

Brown also foresees that the integrated alert and reporting systems and tools in LANDesk Management Suite 2.0 will be very helpful for keeping mission-critical applications up and running full-time. He plans to set up an alert management model that will notify the appropriate people of potential problems via e-mail or beepers.

Print and queue management is another area in which Brown sees the LANDesk Management Suite 2.0 providing needed services. Helix Health System has approximately 100 networked HP LaserJet printers that must

be up 24 hours a day because they serve CIS workstations, he explains. The LANDesk Management Suite v2.0 will report when a printer is out of paper or low on toner, so health care providers don't face obstacles when they need to print patient orders.

Brown says the "birth to grave" metaphor that reflects a more enlightened approach to patient care is just as applicable on the network side. When management solutions work together, he explains, it's possible to manage the network as a whole, from the workstation to the hub to the WAN connection to overall traffic. Helix sees LANDesk Management Suite as an integrated component of that network management solution.

"LANDesk Management Suite is a strong integrated application that fits in with other network management platforms, including Novell's NMS," he says. "It's scalable to the enterprise and useable, for a variety of reasons and by a variety of people, from the help desk support person to a strategic planner for network operations.

"Any network that we're going to support across the WAN will have LANDesk Management Suite deployed on the workstation. It's a key workstation-level tool and a key tool overall.

For More Information

Call FaxBack*, Intel's 24-hour response service at 800-525-3019 and request documents 5544 and 5557 for more information on the LANDesk Management Suite.