Top Medical School Consolidates Network Monitoring with WhatsUp Gold

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Clinical School Computing Service

KEY CHALLENGE

› Multiple network monitors delay IT staff's ability to respond to network and application outages.

SOLUTION

› WhatsUp Gold Network Monitoring and Management Software

BENEFITS

› Single pane-of-glass monitoring replaces several standalone monitors

› Simplified IT staff access to all network monitoring tasks

› Layer 2/3 discovery and mapping enhances insight into age and models of network switches in use

› Improvesd wireless access and ability to isolate and control bandwidth abusers, and spot rogue devices

› After-hours alerting contributes to peace of mind

Cambridge University's School of Clinical Medicine — one of the world's top three medical schools — retains its patient-centered approach to medical care, a commitment that has roots in its year 1540 founding. With 2,500 staff connected over a network spanning the school's large campus in Cambridge, England, Stephen Hoensch, Core Infrastructure Manager, is responsible for ensuring continuous availability of its applications to users through the school's large network.

Multiple monitors create headaches for staff

Until recently, the IT staff's ability to keep the network running smoothly was hampered by the number of monitoring tools it had to manage in order to view all components and manage disruptions. "We lacked a single view of the entire network infrastructure. Key staff members were constantly checking on a number of separate monitoring solutions just to make sure they were working," Hoensch points out.

"Only a select group knew how each monitor was created. Collectively the separate monitors required too much time and effort by the team to oversee. We experienced delays in receiving alerts and complications in getting new monitors/alerts installed and working as one. We needed a centrally monitored solution."

The school drew up specifications for monitoring core infrastructure elements like email, Active Directory, websites, databases and particularly a growing wireless infrastructure. "The wireless service offered just a few years ago was dramatically smaller than today," Hoensch adds. "Users are more mobile; we find that half of all the connections to our email server are from mobile devices."

Challenge to monitor an expanding IT infrastructure

The school's desired network monitoring capabilities stretched even beyond IT network components to include environmental monitoring. Senior Technical Consultant David Bell of Grant McGregor, an Ipswitch partner based in the UK, says the school wanted to monitor sensor equipment the school was acquiring to protect against fire, flood or a security breach in the server rooms. "The school wanted alerts to be sent out of hours, with SMS messaging for critical failures and email alerts for less serious issues," Bell explains. "Most importantly, the solution had to be scalable, as the school is incorporating many remote sites and has plans to link with other schools, which could more than double the network's current size."

Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold most straightforward to install

Bell offered three products from different vendors to Hoensch for 30-day trial periods. Within the first thirty minutes of a 30-day free trial for Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold, Hoensch was able to begin testing the software without any support. Within five

days, he concluded that Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold was both the most suitable choice for enterprise use and the most straightforward to install. Additionally, he was impressed with the yearly support contract Ipswitch offers, giving him access to the latest versions of the software.

With support from Grant McGregor, Hoensch installed WhatsUp Gold with 300 devices. The staff began monitoring key servers and storage; then progressed slowly to key network devices, firewalls, switches and more. They then moved to monitor wireless AP and almost all network switches, and even environmental sensors in server rooms, ready to send an alert in the event of a smoke, heat, flood or security breach.

The team appreciated Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold's ability to create a very complete Layer 2/3 map of everything on the network, with a level of detail difficult to obtain with a manual audit. "WhatsUp Gold was able to build a map of our network and has provided us with some useful insight to the age and models of network switches in use," Hoensch reports.

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>
> STEPHEN HOENSCH
> Core Infrastructure Manager

Improving wireless access

Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold is well suited to the needs of the school's enterprise environment where a broad population of students, faculty and others have little patience for dead spots in the school's wireless infrastructure that block access to online information. Taking advantage of Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold's data, Hoensch says his team can quickly enforce fair usage policies by identifying any users abusing wireless rules, detecting rogue devices on the internal network, spotting users abusing the service and revealing bottlenecks in the provision of wireless APs. The software also monitors network security and bandwidth in detail and helps enforce the school's BYOD policy, ensuring that personal devices connected to the network are also monitored.

Keeps working out of hours

Hoensch appreciates Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold's ability to be configured to send SMS messages to inform the team of problems that occur out of work hours. "This was a key feature we wanted to make use of, and moving to a centrally monitored solution provided a way for us to receive all of the required monitors and alerts," Hoensch says.

Asked to summarize other significant benefits of acquiring an automated network monitoring system for the university, Hoensch lists "Value, ease of use and support from our resellers on this product. By moving to Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold we were able to teach the staff one system. All monitors were easy to configure and understand."

About Ipswitch, Inc.

Ipswitch helps solve complex IT problems with simple solutions. The company's software is trusted by millions of people worldwide to transfer files between systems, business partners and customers; and to monitor networks, applications and servers. Ipswitch was founded in 1991 and is based in Burlington, Massachusetts with offices throughout the U.S., Europe and Asia. For more information, visit www.ipswitch.com.

For a free trial please visit: www.ipswitch.com/free-trials/whatsupgold