

SOUTH DAKOTA'S BUREAU OF INFORMATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

CHALLENGE

The State of South Dakota's Bureau of Information and Telecommunications (BIT) supports approximately 9,800 computers in more than 240 cities spread across the entire state of South Dakota, ensuring the state's IT organization is responsive, reliable and aligned to support business needs.

Managing state-wide IT infrastructures, scattered throughout 380 miles east-west and 210 miles north-south, from a centralized department with only a few remote offices presents a monumental challenge to the BIT support team.

"First and foremost, the geography of the state and distribution of computers and offices supported by BIT, located across the entire state, affects travel, response time, and efficiency. In addition, prior to Goverlan we had a higher number of support staff. However, due to budget constraints we reduced our staff by 15%. We needed to improve our remote support capabilities since our work load and number of computers supported remained the same, creating a high work load per technician and having a detrimental effect on efficiency, call time resolution, and errors made," explained Keith Hemmelman, computer support analyst for LAN Services.

"The wide range of software and computer configurations also presents a challenge, since these can differ from office to office or even computer to computer, making it invaluable for our technicians to be able to adapt to the shifting support needs. Another key technical challenge for us was how to deploy non-Microsoft software updates such as Adobe Flash, JAVA, etc. Many of these updates fix security vulnerabilities in the product and our concern was how to update these on a mass scale. We didn't have an efficient way to do this", he added.

SOLUTION

To solve the challenges below, BIT needed to find a solution that was both cost-effective and dynamic.

- Providing support to clients across a widespread geographical area
- Maintaining an optimal level of support despite limited staff
- Deploying important software updates on a mass scale
- Staying responsive to the shifting needs of diverse environments across their network

After evaluating a number of alternatives, Hemmelman and the BIT team chose the Goverlan Remote Administration Suite.

"The primary factor for choosing Goverlan was the price versus features. We felt Goverlan offered a tremendous amount of capabilities for the costs involved," said the BIT management team.

The BIT team was impressed with the wide feature set Goverlan offers as well as with its ease of use right out of the box. They particularly liked its Scope Actions feature, which has the ability to reach large numbers of computers and perform a vast range of tasks such as software installation, computer configuration changes, and extensive reporting.

"We could do some of the things Goverlan offers before, but it required multiple tools and solutions, some of which were only partly functional. Goverlan wrapped all those abilities together, and much more, and presented it in a single solution product. As with any product, you have an initial learning curve. However, we found this to be minor and our technicians had no problems adapting to and becoming proficient using the Goverlan Suite," they added.

With an effortless installation and deployment process, the BIT team could get started putting Goverlan to work.



BENEFITS / ROI

- *Reduced on-site visits. Saved 431 trips amounting to 60,800 travel miles to remote sites saving many days of work with a travel and staff cost savings of \$46,500 in the last year and a half*
- *Maintained level of support/ machines supported with fewer staff*
- *Improved first call resolution*
- *Improved responsiveness to changing configurations across networks*

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- BIT Management Team

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RESULTS

“The most significant cost savings with Goverlan have been with travel avoidance and staff time. We’re now able to remotely administer actions quicker and more efficiently and perform mass software updates with the simple click of a mouse or scheduled job in Goverlan”, said the BIT management team. In the last year and a half, BIT estimates a savings of 431 trips amounting to a total of 60,800 travel miles to remote sites, adding to many days of work with a travel and staff cost savings of \$46,500.

Goverlan’s powerful support and administration features increase the range of administrative tasks that a single technician can perform on a mass scale, including deploying software updates on large groups of machines. “With Goverlan, our workload itself per say hasn’t diminished, but we are able to be more efficient using the remote administration of large numbers of computers. Performing mass software upgrades in offices has now become more efficient since in many cases we can ‘batch’ that as a job in Goverlan instead of hitting computers one by one as in the past,” said the BIT support team.

“We are pleased with the ability to run jobs; we can do a variety of tasks anywhere from software installs to file copies, to registry settings updates, etc. We also heavily use the administration abilities where you can reach out to a remote computer and interactively perform a wide variety of administrative tasks directly on the target computer, not to mention interact directly with your Active Directory objects,” they added.

In addition to extended administrative capabilities which have increased efficiency despite staffing cuts, the automation and fast access to detailed machine/user information has made BIT technicians better able to respond to shifting environments, greatly increasing support call efficiency. “With so many different agencies and staff to support, their software and needs can range widely, causing technicians to forget things or take extra time to refresh their memory of things. With Goverlan, many tasks like software installations can be easily automated and a tech doesn’t need to remember where the software install files are located for a specific item and simply run a job with Goverlan. Technicians can remotely review the configuration of other computers in an office if needed to refresh their memory of computer configurations prior to making contact, which can make the support call more efficient because the technician will have fewer questions they need to ask,” explained the BIT support team.

BIT also appreciates the support their team gets as a customer, noting; “We find the support received from PJ Technologies to be quick and responsive. We have had nothing but positive results with our requests for help via email or on the forum and also are impressed with the willingness to listen, and to implement new feature requests into the product.”

CONCLUSION

BIT plans to use Goverlan to solve future IT challenges. “Moving forward we constantly have new software programs to install and the first thing we look at now is if we can deploy it via Goverlan, which will save us time and effort. Doing administration and support remotely frees up travel time to use for other support tasks which is valuable because we have a constant cycle of new computer, operating systems, software products, and more that need to be implemented and supported,” said Hemmelman.

We asked the BIT team to share their favorite feature. “You may get a different answer from each technician, but the Scope Action feature for running jobs on remote computers is used daily. We also use the Remote Control feature daily and prefer it over the Microsoft’s Remote Assistance and Remote Desktop programs. The Administration and Diagnostics feature gets used heavily also because of the depth in which you can interact with your Active Directory objects and remote computers for live interaction and administration,” he added.

Although BIT originally had a concern deploying the remote agent that Goverlan uses, after installing it on thousands of computers and running it for over a year and a half, all concerns have been alleviated because they have not had a single reported issue.

ABOUT BIT

BIT provides technology services across the Executive, Legislative & Judicial branches of state government. Those technology services include desktop support, networking, development, hosting, security & many other technology services. The LAN Services group is comprised of 41 staff members directly dedicated to computer tech support and five additional staff managing its IT Help Desk. BIT strives to provide a reliable, secure and agile infrastructure, delivering valuable services through advanced technology solutions and retaining a highly skilled workforce to directly support their clients and the services they provide. BIT is primarily a centralized IT Department with remote offices housing some support staff who in turn support computers and offices in their designated geographic area of coverage.

ABOUT PJ TECHNOLOGIES

PJ Technologies is a leading provider of systems management software.

PJ Technologies’ solutions are entirely implemented and managed from within the client’s infrastructure, thereby fostering security, integrity and control.