

Memorial Hospital Keeps Its Network Healthy With Ipswitch WhatsUp® Gold

Datasheet

Company:

Memorial Hospital

Industry:

Healthcare / Medical Services

Business challenge:

Memorial Hospital needed a cost-effective network management solution to map and monitor the approximately 150 routers and switches in its citywide network.

Outcome:

The hospital used Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold to map its existing network. Easy to install, and easy to maintain, WhatsUp Gold provides the hospital with effective network management capabilities and low total cost of ownership.

Located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Memorial Hospital has established a reputation for incorporating the latest technology with a dedication to compassionate, family-centered care. The hospital's commitment to excellence is reflected not only in its skilled staff, but also in the technology Memorial employs in fulfilling its mission to optimize the health, safety and comfort of its patients.

Recently, Memorial's IT group faced a challenge: the hospital's network had been growing for several years without written documentation and the IT group needed to map and document the existing network. In addition, the hospital wanted to improve its ability to monitor its network resources and respond to network issues more quickly. After considering more complicated and costly network management solutions, Memorial adopted Ipswitch WhatsUp Gold for its ease of use, low total cost of ownership, and its ability to fulfill the hospital's network management needs without excess complexity.

Today the hospital is using WhatsUp Gold to effectively manage a network that supports approximately 3500 users and spans 17 different sites throughout Colorado Springs. Each site can include multiple buildings; and WhatsUp Gold monitors approximately 150 devices, including routers and switches, which are distributed in various locations throughout those buildings.

Selecting WhatsUp Gold

Before selecting WhatsUp Gold, the hospital had originally planned on implementing HP OpenView. After reconsidering both the upfront costs and the long term maintenance costs of that approach, Memorial began looking for an alternative. Amir Safayan, Lead Network Engineer for Memorial, recalls, "We had budgeted a large amount for HP OpenView. When we started investigating the overhead required in man-hours to manage it, the training that would be required, and the complexity, I started looking for another solution. I downloaded the trial version of WhatsUp Gold and started working with it. I convinced management that we were going down the wrong path with HP OpenView. We didn't have the time for either the training or the long-term maintenance that it required."

According to Safayan, WhatsUp Gold provides all the functionality that Memorial needs for a fraction of the cost of other network management solutions. He also notes that total cost of ownership is further reduced by WhatsUp Gold's superior ease of use. Safayan adds, "The reality is that we would only use a small percentage of the features available of HP OpenView. We couldn't imagine what we would have to do with that tool to make it worthwhile. WhatsUp Gold offers superior return on investments and we know we are getting our money's worth. And our ongoing maintenance costs are practically non-existent. Plus, with WhatsUp Gold, you don't need a lot of training; in fact I didn't need any."

10 Maguire Road, Suite 220
Lexington, MA 02421
(781) 676-5700

Zekeringstraat 17
1014 BM, Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Mapping the Network

Memorial's network was documented in various static diagrams and spreadsheets when Safayan joined the hospital. He recalls, "The previous engineer had designed it. He was very comfortable with it because he had much of it memorized, including IP addresses. When I inherited responsibility for managing the network, I had no idea what was where; it just was a murky, nebulous network. There was a sense that we had a lot of gear out there, and we needed to quickly assess that information to document the network. In the process of doing that we used WhatsUp Gold, which gave us a visual reference for the entire network that is so critically important to understanding what we have."

Simplified Traffic Analysis

Memorial has also capitalized on the extensible architecture of WhatsUp Gold to further leverage its investment. For example, Memorial uses Denika Performance Trender from Somix Technologies to complement and expand WhatsUp Gold's performance monitoring capabilities. Denika provides historical graphs of traffic load on network connections, as well as CPU and memory usage or any SNMP MIB. "We use Denika to monitor the traffic patterns on our WAN links. We rely on it for traffic analysis and monitoring WAN bandwidth consumption on a historic, graphical basis. We also use it to troubleshoot intermittent network failures. For example, if a user complains of application failures, I can establish a graph that maps ping response from my main site out to his remote site, and use the maps to correlate the problem with the network status."

Although Memorial's WAN links are running at below capacity today, Safayan anticipates using Denika and WhatsUp Gold to facilitate resource allocation planning in the future. "We can look at reports for the past six months, for example, and see that we are approaching saturation and that we may need to upgrade a T1 line."

Future Plans

Although Memorial only began using WhatsUp Gold recently, Safayan reports that the hospital is already seeing benefits. "We use WhatsUp Gold every day. If something is wrong with our network, we can quickly see what the impact is on the network and isolate where the particular failure is."

In the near future, Safayan anticipates leveraging more of the capabilities of WhatsUp Gold to further simplify the network management responsibilities of his team. "I know that WhatsUp Gold is more powerful than what I am using it for. We are planning to leverage more of its alerting and monitoring capabilities, as well as its ability to monitor Windows services and restart them if they fail. But right now, with WhatsUp Gold and Denika we have a visual tool that allows us to easily gain access to device information, and that is very important to us."