

»» Proactive Solutions for Today's Healthcare



Gwinnett Hospital System is a not-for-profit healthcare network serving Gwinnett County and surrounding areas in Georgia. The system has provided a wide array of high-quality services for more than 60 years. Today, the system serves the largest base of patients in the area at facilities that include the flagship Gwinnett Medical Center, three hospitals and additional supporting medical facilities. More than 4,100 people are employed by the system and more than 700 physicians are affiliated with system hospitals and clinics.

A few years ago, Gwinnett Hospital System was struggling with trying to manage its infrastructure of desktops, servers, handhelds and laptops without the benefit of a complete management solution. The system's existing solution was incomplete and rapidly depreciating in the value it returned because it wasn't being maintained or updated.

"We had no remote control, no patching; we didn't have anything that would allow us to remotely or centrally manage our infrastructure. What we did have was a lot of sneakernet, which resulted in a lot of time wasted to try and take advantage of technology that was only half working or not working at all," said Keith Brown, Gwinnett Hospital System network administrator.

Finding the Right Solution

Gwinnett Hospital System did an extensive evaluation when looking for a systems management solution. During the search, the hospital system had to keep in mind that, as a not-for-profit organization, there wasn't a lot of capital available for training or added infrastructure. "We went through an evaluation of competitive products. Microsoft wasn't nearly as complete as LANDesk. We also looked at ZENworks. Altiris never made it in the door," said Keith.

At the end of its evaluation, Gwinnett Hospital System chose LANDesk® solutions. "The ease of use really stood out for us. Our tech group is taxed with so much, it's hard for them to stay up on everything they need to know. And when you sit in front of the LANDesk® console, you can easily connect the dots without a lot of work. Visually you can identify what you need to do on your own, most of the time," Keith said. "How well the LANDesk solution integrated, with less hardware, was a big factor in our decision too."

Business Needs

- Replace time-consuming, incomplete management system.
- Locate an easy-to-use solution that technicians could easily use.
- Successfully and cost-effectively manage systems located on-site and in the field.
- Find a solution that wouldn't require intensive new infrastructure or training.
- Gain visibility into its systemwide hardware and software assets.
- Keep up with the daily challenge of patch management.

Solution

- LANDesk® Management Suite
- LANDesk® Security Suite
- LANDesk® Patch Manager
- Intel® vPro™

Business Benefits

- Found a complete, centralized systems management solution compatible with its not-for-profit budget and its existing infrastructure.
- Access a rapid time to value, reduce hassles and increase productivity.
- Spend less time and money managing systems.
- Have secure visibility into on-site and field-based systems without physical access to the systems and without negatively impacting its network or the systems.
- See, monitor and maintain assets in all its hardware and software inventories and standardize.
- Have a flexible, reliable patch management solution that lets it patch the way it wants to patch.

He added, “The LANDesk solution is agnostic—it doesn’t care whether it’s working with Novell or Microsoft. Novell wants you to have ZENworks. With LANDesk being agnostic, it doesn’t matter what product it’s associated with. That was one of the bigger reasons we went with it, —because of how well it integrated with what we had. A lot of people who were against it are now for it, because they’ve seen the benefits of its independence.”

Other capabilities that made the hospital system choose LANDesk included technologies such as LANDesk® Security Suite, LANDesk® Management Gateway, LANDesk® Peer Download™ technology, LANDesk® Targeted Multicast™ technology and PXE proxy. “LANDesk Peer Download technology, LANDesk Targeted Multicast technology offer a lot. And PXE proxy is an amazing technology,” Keith said. “With it, we don’t need to purchase servers, so we save a lot on hardware costs. Most other solutions require a server per subnet. With PXE proxy, we don’t have to have a server per subnet, we can have a rep that can find the core server without employing any extra hardware. We can take an existing device and run with it. It’s proven quite reliable in our environment from both a financial and a productivity point of view.”

Newfound Visibility

LANDesk® solutions also give Gwinnett Hospital System the visibility to see, monitor and maintain assets in all its hardware and software inventories.

“We have the means to inventory what we have now. Before, we were inundated with nonstandard operating systems and no way to see them. With LANDesk, we’ve been able to repair and replace all of that,” said Keith.

Unexpected Value

Even though Gwinnett Hospital System was confident in its choice of LANDesk® management solutions, it has realized even more value that it planned on with its LANDesk® implementation. “A lot of the technologies LANDesk offers aren’t apparent on the surface, but when you have an opportunity to use them, you understand just how powerful they are,” Keith said. “We’re at a point now that when we plug a system into the network, the LANDesk® client is included—it’s not optional, because of the value it gives us. We also understand that having that client gives us the ability to do remote control and other things that we just can’t do if the agent isn’t there. We can interact with people with the remote control capability; we can’t do that with remote desktop.”

LANDesk management solutions also support Intel® vPro™ technology-enabled systems, which enhance Gwinnett Hospital System’s ability to perform efficient remote management and accurate inventory collection even in the absence of an operating system. For example, when systems are hung or crashed, they can’t be remotely accessed, diagnosed or fixed, and often require multiple visits to the user’s desk. LANDesk solutions and Intel vPro technology enable IT staff to perform out-of-band discovery of vPro-based hardware and software assets, remotely heal vPro-based systems regardless of OS or system state, accurately account for IT assets and manage the computing fleet more cost-effectively.

Problem Patched and Solved

No organization is free from the ongoing need to deploy Microsoft patches quickly and cost-effectively. Gwinnett Hospital System had tried a number of products to automate the process but nothing worked very well. However, after installing LANDesk® Security Suite technology with the accompanying LANDesk® Patch Manager solution, the hospital system found exactly what it needed. Not only can Gwinnett staff manage the installation of Microsoft OS patches for Win9x and above, they can also manage Linux, HP UX and Novell patches. They can also patch applications, drivers and BIOS upgrades.

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GWINNETT HOSPITAL SYSTEM

NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR

“Patching is by far one of my biggest battles everyday,” shared Keith. “It’s also one of the biggest, most appreciated features of our LANDesk solution. Patching with LANDesk is flexible, which allows us to do a lot of things. We determine how we want it to patch.”

One of Keith’s favorite features of LANDesk Security Suite is its ability to proactively scan for and remove spyware and other malware. In 2005 the hospital system encountered several nasty viruses that took their toll on many organizations, but not Gwinnett. Keith was able to sit back and release the patch to all applicable Windows computers in less than an hour. The most recent use of LANDesk Security Suite was with regard to Daylight Savings Time, where Keith single-handedly applied the necessary Microsoft patch to more than 2,300 computers in one night after each release of the patch.

A Gateway to Easier Management

Gwinnett Hospital System recently upgraded from its initial version of LANDesk® solutions. One of the main reasons for the upgrade was to access LANDesk® Management Gateway, which enables IT administrators to securely manage and secure field-based or traveling laptops across the Internet without a dedicated leased line or VPN and without punching a hole in the firewall.

“We’re trying to incorporate doctors’ practices into our support network, which has proven quite challenging. The doctors aren’t hospital employees. And normally, we don’t have any visibility into what they’re doing. We have to listen to find out what they’re doing, which may be successful or may not be. The gateway gives us visibility into the doctors’ client systems without impacting those systems. Also, we have remote facilities and contract employees; for some employees, if they don’t have to come in, which is the case for some; they work from home. The gateway solution provides visibility into these clients and allows us to easily and efficiently help users when they have trouble,” Keith said.

An Eye to the Future

While Gwinnett Hospital System isn’t currently taking advantage of the handheld management features in LANDesk® solutions, it is looking at those features. The hospital system uses handheld devices, including Blackberries, for medical personnel and even for engineering work orders. Pharmacists use handhelds to access an inventory of pharmacy medicines and can reorder medications over a handheld. The hospital system is interested in being able to automate asset discovery and inventory management in addition to asset monitoring and change control alerting with the LANDesk® handheld management solution.

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