

City of Columbia, Tennessee makes 'beautiful music' with Dell KACE



"The Dell KACE K1000 Management Appliance has allowed us to accomplish our routine IT goals and also has allowed us to work on innovating, which is truly our mission."

*Rick Harrison, MIS Director,
City of Columbia*



Customer Profile

Company:	City of Columbia, Tennessee
Industry:	Government
Country:	United States
Web:	www.columbiatn.com

Business Need

Due to the city's rapidly growing IT infrastructure, tasks proved more and more difficult to manage and complete in a timely manner. The team had trouble keeping accurate track of the IT assets to properly inventory them. Columbia's small IT team also found it difficult to keep up with the growing number of software distributions, configuration management and patch management tasks that it was asked to perform.

Solution

Columbia deployed the Dell KACE™ K1000 Management Appliance. By automating software distribution tasks, configuration management and patching functions, to offering top-notch help desk and technical support, the Dell KACE solution proved to meet all of the city's growing needs.

Save Time.

Save Your Organization Money.

- More than 4,100 IT department hours saved annually in improved physical inventory, patch management, configuration management and service desk
- 50% reduced time spent on physical inventory and audit
- 75% reduced time in software distribution
- 75% reduced time in configuration management
- 75% reduced time in patch management
- 50% reduced time in service desk
- \$52,000 annual savings on service desk tasks alone
- One month ROI
- \$140,000 one-year ROI
- \$152,000 annual cost savings

The City of Columbia is located approximately 45 miles south of Nashville, Tennessee, deep in country music's heartland. With a population of 38,000, Columbia offers activities of interest for everyone, whether it is historical homes, sports, antiques, shopping or the annual Mule Parade. Yes, mules played an instrumental role in the settlement of Columbia, and now attract thousands of spectators for the annual Mule Day Parade. Columbia is an attractive alternative to the bustle of metropolitan Nashville and the community is seeing record growth and development of new parks and businesses.

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As it attracts new residents and businesses, Columbia's IT team does its best to support the growth. Keeping up on the newest technology innovations is a key component to the city's success. Columbia's IT department is small. It consists of four people, managing 300 remote and on-site computers that support city services, which are spread across 20 remote department sites. Finishing important IT maintenance tasks on time was a challenge as the team was forced to manually travel to each of the 20 sites to accurately track software and hardware inventory on the systems.

Inefficient Systems Management Causes Vulnerabilities

The City of Columbia IT staff worked to keep up with its inventory and systems maintenance demands, but due to the city's rapidly growing IT infrastructure, tasks proved more and more difficult to manage and complete in a timely manner. For instance, the team had trouble keeping accurate track of the IT assets to properly inventory them. Columbia's small IT team also found it difficult to keep up with the growing number of software distributions, configuration management and patch

management tasks that it was asked to perform. According to Rick Harrison, MIS director for the City of Columbia, the IT team had no other means than to physically visit each of the 300 computers located in city offices for desktop maintenance, which was definitely not music to the IT team's ears.

"Many of our systems did not have the latest in patching fixes and therefore they were very vulnerable. Trying to support multiple versions and abundant updates from common products, like Microsoft® Office Suite, was almost impossible," Harrison says. "We just couldn't seem to get to everything. Our response time was slower than we wanted and hiring additional staff was not an option for us. We knew there had to be something out there to get us back on track and solve our IT challenges, but without breaking the bank."

Technology at Work

Solutions

Dell KACE™K1000 Management Appliance

4,100 Hours Saved Annually in IT Time

The IT team decided to look for a new solution that would allow the City of Columbia to effectively address and manage overall systems tasks, including management of the city's IT inventory. Columbia's IT staff evaluated the Dell KACE K1000 Management Appliance, as it was in use in a neighboring city. The solution came highly recommended, and the Dell KACE solution fit all of Columbia's needs—from price point and ease-of-use to breadth of functionality.

Columbia decided on the purchase of the Dell KACE K1000 Management Appliance. "Out of the box, the Management Appliance met all the requirements needed for the City of Columbia," Harrison says. By automating software distribution tasks, configuration management and patching functions, to offering top-notch help desk and technical support, the Dell KACE solution saves the IT staff more than 4,100 hours annually and had a payback period of less than one month.

\$152,000 Annually in Cost Savings

"The thing I appreciate most about our Dell KACE Management Appliance is that it saves our IT team a tremendous amount time and that translates to a great deal of money. Our staff had a total number of cost savings of more than \$152,000 annually," Harrison says. "In this economy where we are continually asked to do more with less, Dell KACE has been critical to our success. The Dell KACE Management Appliance has allowed us to accomplish our routine IT goals and also has allowed us to work on innovating, which is truly our mission."

Since implementing the K1000, the City of Columbia has experienced multiple benefits. In particular the automation the appliance offers has resulted in an easy-to-use, time efficient and a more

comprehensive way to handle the city's most critical IT tasks. Now, in a matter of minutes, the IT staff can discover exactly what hardware is present in the city's network and what software licenses are being used. This valuable information allows the IT team to take the appropriate steps to keep software licenses up-to-date, saving extra charges from software vendors.

"Having a comprehensive view of our IT inventory was extremely important to us, but probably the biggest source of time savings came from time saved performing software distribution tasks," Harrison says.

300 Computers Updated in 15 Minutes

Rick cites one recent instance where the team needed to update all 300 computers with Adobe Reader. In about 15 minutes, the IT team was able to deploy the update to all 300 computers, allowing users to enjoy the benefits the same day. The Dell KACE software distribution and inventory solution combined saves the city's IT staff 1,200 hours annually.

Another place where the appliance performs especially well for the city is service desk. The Dell KACE service desk enables the city to triage problems in order of significance so the most appropriate staff member is able to quickly address them. The Dell KACE easy-to-use Web interface is popular among the users because they receive immediate feedback on their issue and can then track the progress of their help desk ticket. According to Harrison, it's a win-win situation.

Dell KACE Keeps The City 'In Tune' With Tight Security

The City of Columbia also takes advantage of the Dell KACE security audit and enforcement capabilities, which includes OVAL-based

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vulnerability and scanning of all managed Windows® systems. Dell KACE allows for flexible scheduling and targeting of OVAL vulnerability scans, which can be scheduled to occur on a regular basis or be triggered manually.

The IT team relies on the OVAL capability to monitor for threats to make sure it's in compliance as far as getting patches up to date, which was a major problem before Dell KACE. Currently, the city has 100 percent participation from its workstations, so the IT team

can track the ones that are having problems. This provides the necessary information to quickly plan and execute remediation, which reduces the risk of malware, spyware and viruses and eliminates vulnerabilities.

"I would be happy to recommend the Dell KACE Management Appliance to anyone; it's a powerful, all encompassing IT solution," Harrison says. "I can honestly say the technology has saved us a tremendous amount of both time and money."



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