



SAVING TIME, MONEY LEADS TO BETTER PATIENT CARE FOR NORTHWESTERN MEMORIAL PHYSICIANS GROUP



Altiris proved too costly, complex, and unreliable, so KACE brought in to simplify and optimize

BACKGROUND

Northwestern Memorial Physicians Group (NMPG) is a multi-site practice of primary care physicians affiliated with Northwestern Memorial Hospital. NMPG brings the exceptional quality of Northwestern Memorial Hospital and its affiliated physicians to locations throughout Chicago's neighborhoods and serves over 120,000 patients.

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CHALLENGE

Like many successful medical group practices, NMPG was seeing tremendous growth in a relatively short period of time. This posed challenges for the IT team, such as their ability to quickly jump on system performance issues. NMPG's small IT department was already spread thin—a single engineer was responsible for its 300 workstations—and were having trouble keeping up with the organization's growth. NMPG's IT environment was comprised of a mix of end-user desktops powered by both legacy systems and a myriad of hardware. Two key areas that far exceeded the department's resources were the overwhelming demand to provide regular software updates to both legacy and new desktops, and the systems' ability to efficiently handle network imaging.

Imaging methods time consuming, costly

IT staff were forced to align the 200 servers and 1,000 PCs that were geographically distributed using antiquated imaging methods. In addition, due to the rapid organizational growth, it became apparent NMPG would need to replace one-third of its aging servers every year. NMPG set out to streamline its entire IT organizational makeup to better align IT with business goals: to provide the finest and fastest patient care. Changes inside and out were required across imaging, inventory layout, and systems maintenance in order to streamline IT processes. Past imaging approaches, for example, were time consuming and expensive and included solutions such as Ghost and PowerQuest. However, these images were far too bulky and slow. They were also labor-intensive, which created bandwidth challenges for the IT team.

Altiris: The wrong move

NMPG initially turned to Altiris, but found out deploying Altiris brought them a whole new set of problems.

“When we bought Altiris we thought it was a juicy baked ham, what it ended up being was a stale can of SPAM,” said Albert Grychowski, senior engineer at NMPG.

KACE TIME: NORTHWESTERN

DEPLOYMENT

Less than one week

TRAINING

Less than one week

TIME AND MONEY SAVINGS

- Three month ROI on KBOX Systems Deployment Appliance
- More than \$135,000 in savings in the first year alone
- Saved the team over 1,500 hours in maintenance tasks
- Created new images in about four hours—half the time of previous methods

Initially, Altiris was brought in to solve NMPG's imaging issues. Guy Fuller, technology director for NMPG, found Altiris to be not only extremely costly, but difficult to keep up and running. “When technical support was required, it was near impossible to find anyone to help,” says Fuller. Because most individual elements didn't work with Altiris, it ended up making the system even more complex and extremely aggravating for the NMPG IT team to work with. In addition, Altiris had an annual maintenance cost of \$16,000 per year, a high price for spotty performance.

The IT team was desperate for a simple, cost-effective, and reliable solution that would work to manage and deploy its software. Guy and his team decided to evaluate the KBOX™ Family of Systems Management Appliances from KACE to weigh the benefits compared to what they were getting with Altiris.

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SOLUTION

KBOX Systems Deployment Appliance successfully powers NMPG's IT framework

After an evaluation of KACE appliance-based technologies, the decision was quickly made to swap out Altiris with the KBOX Systems Deployment Appliance, which resulted in immediate time and cost savings. One of the first benefits Guy's team realized about the KBOX was its easy to use plug and play capabilities. Because KBOX is an appliance, little work is required during deployment. It also easily managed the multiple OS platforms that make up NMPG's complex environment including Windows, Mac, and Linux. “I can explain the KACE solution in three words: simple, elegant, affordable—everything we were looking for in a systems deployment solution,” Fuller explained.

Results with KACE within a week

Within a week, the NMPG team was able to begin imaging and deploying software updates and new applications across all 15 regional outpatient offices. Guy's team especially liked the ease of use and rich components of the appliance. This includes a centralized, flexible repository of images and their components which made up the foundation of Northwestern's imaging process. In addition, the KBOX Systems Deployment Appliance offers fully automated scripted installation which makes adding new hardware a trivial task. KBOX is able to create new images in about four hours—half the time as NMPG's previous methods. Along with its reliable technical support, the KBOX Systems Deployment Appliance offered everything Altiris lacked.

“The appliance solution of KBOX is brilliant in its simplicity,” said Fuller. “We are a lean organization—one engineer for 200 employees—so the ease of use and reliability of the Systems Deployment Appliance offered to us was very reassuring. Based on the

problems we had with Altiris, it was shocking to see the savings KBOX gave us. KACE truly allowed us to do more with less.”

KACE delivers huge reductions in provisioning time, user down time

Guy estimates the KBOX Systems Deployment Appliance has cut down the time taken to perform provisioning tasks by approximately 65 percent. Even more important, end-users felt immediate relief from the KBOX. It was estimated the KBOX Systems Deployment Appliance reduced user down-time by 76 percent during the first year. The appliance's ability to automatically provide updates and provision software—tasks in the past that were done manually by end-users—led to the time savings, allowing the NMPG staff to focus on their most important assets, their patients.

The success of the KBOX Systems Deployment Appliance led to the IT department's decision to evaluate and eventually purchase the KBOX Systems Management Appliance as well. The team was interested in bringing in a new technology to support its CMDB and ITIL initiatives. The Systems Management Appliance is used today for configuration management, inventory and audit, and software distribution capabilities. The team estimates it saved over 1,500 hours the first year, equaling a one year ROI of \$33,180.

KBOX adds value in HIPPA compliance

“At the end of the day, we are a hospital and must stay HIPPA-compliant. Immediately the KBOX Systems Management Appliance showed its value in its ability to remotely deploy applications and run maintenance tasks in an effective and more secure way. In addition, its auditing capabilities keep us in line with important HIPPA guidelines,” said Fuller.

SAVE TIME AND MONEY WITH KBOX SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT AND DEPLOYMENT APPLIANCES

Faster and More Reliable Imaging

- Reduced image creation time by 50 percent
- Reduced end-user down time by 76 percent
- KBOX Systems Management Appliance saved the team over 1,500 hours in performing maintenance tasks

Cost Savings

- Eliminated more than \$50,000 in maintenance costs the first year
- Immediate one year ROI of 125 percent
- More than \$135,000 in savings after one year

Time Savings

- Saved more than \$45,000 in end-user productivity time savings
- Reduced end-user down time by 76 percent in the first year
- KBOX has cut provisioning task time by 65 percent



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