



RENOVIS FILLS PRESCRIPTION FOR SAVING TIME AND MONEY WITH KACE™



KBOX™ eliminates manual deployments that wasted time and money, equips pharmaceutical company to handle future expansion

BACKGROUND

Founded in 2000, Renovis is a biopharmaceutical company with a primary focus on the discovery, development and commercialization of drugs to treat neurological diseases and disorders. A five-person IT team supports more than 100 employees in the South San Francisco headquarters office, mostly scientists and researchers.

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CHALLENGE

Manual software deployment resulted in wasted time, delayed projects

With the company poised for dramatic growth as early drug trials showed promise, Senior Systems Administrator Mark Bernfield said the IT support team wanted to prepare for possible future expansion. Critical to those preparations was the need to automate software deployment across the company.

“We’re still a small company,” Bernfield said. “We were running around a lot. We used to do deployments manually, resulting in a lot of wasted time, deadlines pushed out by scheduling conflicts, and projects not getting finished.”

Time for upgrades without impacting professionals difficult to schedule

A big challenge to the support team was working around the schedules of the scientists, as downtime for the researchers and scientists was very costly for routine software deployments and upgrades. It’s a classic problem in any work environment with highly-paid professionals.

“You’re very dependent upon everyone else’s schedule,” Bernfield said. “You have to find a convenient time to kick each of them off their system, which can be very difficult when you need to perform the upgrade efficiently and they need to get their work done.”

The IT environment at Renovis is primarily Windows, aside from a handful of UNIX servers dedicated to Informatics. The network infrastructure is mostly Cisco.

Bernfield and the IT team support 115 users on a dozen servers running Windows 2000 and 2003 Servers with a 60-40 mix of Windows XP and Windows 2000 on the clients. Microsoft Office runs on most every

desktop along with specialized chemistry and biology applications and standard third-party applications such as Adobe Acrobat. He also runs anti-spyware, anti-virus and Windows patch management programs company-wide.

KACE TIME: RENOVIS

DEPLOYMENT

One day

TRAINING

8 hour web-based training

TIME AND MONEY SAVINGS

- Eliminated down time for researchers and scientists
- Scripted installations for fast deployments
- User-driven, automated installations
- Prepared for growth as new drugs come to market

Need to scale to accommodate growing number of users

Tired of running around manually doing even minor updates, Bernfield and his team said the immediate business problem they wanted to solve by automation was “a software push solution.”

“In order to scale and grow, with the amount of people here, just do the numbers,” he said. “We can’t just run around and update applications. If you can have just one product to do that automatically, that’s just going to save you money right there. We had simple needs. What it came down to was a software distribution solution that didn’t require a lot of bells and whistles and was not difficult to deploy. That’s what we found with the KBOX.”

SOLUTION

KBOX provided a time saving solution in a single appliance

Tasked to find an automated solution for software deployment, Bernfield quickly discovered KACE and the KBOX on the Web at www.appdeploy.com. The team set up a project to evaluate the KBOX appliance and several software-only solutions. It was a brief evaluation.

“When we found KACE and the KBOX, the evaluation pretty much stopped there,” Bernfield said. “Everything was encapsulated in a single appliance. You weren’t running around the network figuring out the different paths to your application installers. You didn’t need a separate server dedicated to it. The KBOX was integrated, easy-to-use and configure and you could keep all the software deployments on it as well, instead of on a bunch of different servers.”

KBOX helps quickly hone in on systems management requirements

Unlike some of the other vendors under evaluations, KACE quickly agreed to provide a trial unit to Renovis. Bernfield said he appreciated the trial opportunity.

“We spent a lot of time hitting the KBOX to see what it could do,” he said. “That helped us figure out our requirements. This was a whole new world to us.”

Bernfield also looked closely at the ScriptLogic product but found that the software alone cost more than the all-in-one KBOX appliance, and ScriptLogic required at least two dedicated, high-end servers.

AD integration, portal feature big time savers

Several features on the KBOX proved critical to Bernfield and his team.

First, the Active Directory integration was seamless. “The AD integration is very important to us,” Bernfield said. “It allows users to log into the KBOX to use it as a portal without needing a new username and password, and doesn’t create more accounts for IT to manage. If it didn’t do AD, that would be a major red flag.”

The portal feature of the KBOX was a huge hit with his scientist users. It allows users to install software, patches and updates when they’re ready and the timing is convenient. No more pushing scientists off their workstations. “The portal feature saves us a lot of time,” he said. “We can create MSI files and KBOX installs those packages on the various workstations when the users want. Everybody wins.”

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KBOX scripting enables faster deployments

Finally, the scripting function of the KBOX is easy-to-use. “It’s very versatile,” Bernfield said. “It’s easy to update registry files and keys. You can quickly do different kinds of deployments. And because it works with XML, you can write scripts outside or use the KBOX GUI.”

Pleasantly surprised by inventory capabilities

One pleasant surprise of the KBOX was the inventory feature. Renovis had not even considered that feature in the initial purchase decision.

Currently Renovis relies on Centennial for asset management. It’s a solution that has worked well for the company. But Bernfield said the KBOX is better in many ways and Renovis may soon make a switch.

“The KBOX interface for inventories was superior,” Bernfield said. “It provides information that you can expand easily in different areas with a number of categories that you can expand or contract as you wish. We can’t customize our current system. KBOX gives you very good control.”

SAVE TIME AND MONEY WITH KBOX SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT APPLIANCE

Faster System Evaluation and Justification

- Trial unit quickly provided
- Brief evaluation period

Accelerated System Test and Acquisition

- KBOX assisted with requirements definition

Streamlined Deployment and Testing

- No additional server required
- Onsite, web-based training

Immediate ROI

- Eliminated down time for researchers and scientists
- Scripted installations for fast deployments
- User-driven, automated installations
- Prepared for growth as new drugs come to market



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