

Background

When Puyallup, Wash.-based healthcare provider, Apple Physical Therapy, needed to streamline and secure its IT administrative tasks, it formed a local partnership with Tukwila, Wash.-based Northwest Computer Support, a ScriptLogic reseller and leading provider of computer hardware, software and services. Apple operates more than 20 clinics throughout King, Pierce, and Thurston counties. In addition to physical therapy and athletic training services, the company provides work conditioning, massage therapy, occupational therapy and women's health services. The partnership between Apple and Northwest has allowed Apple access to ScriptLogic products and expert consultative services, which have drastically improved the overall productivity and security of the facility's IT infrastructure.

"One of the reasons I like ScriptLogic products is because they have helped me show compliance," said Tim Pierson, IT director at Apple Physical Therapy. "They have also allowed me to manage my desktops a lot more easily and efficiently, and the remote management functionality is something I use all of the time."

The Challenge: Besieged by a Host of Networking Needs

As a physical therapist, Tim Pierson knows the demands of providing exceptional healthcare services. As Apple Physical Therapy's current IT director, Pierson also understands the challenges of supervising the IT resources for the facility's nearly two dozen clinics spread loosely throughout the Puget Sound area. For months, Pierson struggled to simplify routine IT administrative tasks, manage desktops and audit network access, especially when considering the stringent requirements of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

A few years ago, Apple had a limited array of IT management tools. Challenging network issues, such as an influx of new staff members and the need to provide on-site technical support at each of Apple's remote clinics, made Pierson's work difficult and time consuming. Pierson needed to travel to each of the sites in the event of computer glitches or employee requests for technical support. Clinics are several miles apart and traveling to and from multiple clinics on the same day proved remarkably time consuming.

Until very recently, Pierson was the only network manager. He was responsible for a total of five servers, 180 desktops and nearly 300 users, and he was charged with maintaining network operability. Like most

healthcare facilities, Apple's end users often include graduate students engaged in physical therapy internships, and temporary workers filling in for employees on leave or helping Apple meet the demands of growing patient populations. After a few months, these students and workers would be replaced and the cycle would begin again.

This steady flow of people through Apple's doors made tracking network access extremely challenging for Pierson; not to mention, ensuring the security of patient files in accordance with regulatory compliance is no small feat when one considers the 400 to 2000 patients seeking treatment at the various clinics each month. Auditing network access is one of the key provisions of HIPAA. Failure to do so can result in extraordinary fines.

Pierson needed help. He searched for a way to simplify routine IT administrative tasks, manage desktops from a remote location and audit and secure network access. The support Pierson sought would ultimately come through an unlikely channel. While attending a physician friend's open house, Pierson met a technician with Northwest Computer Support, a software reseller and ScriptLogic partner that could provide Pierson with answers to his network management problems.

The Solution: Northwest Recommends ScriptLogic Solutions

Northwest Computer Support met with Pierson to outline his networking needs. Among the concerns he noted was difficulty controlling Apple's workgroup environment. Both parties agreed the facility would be more secure if it were to shift to a single domain. Pierson expressed interest in solutions that would allow him to map drives and printers, create Microsoft® Outlook™ profiles, reach desktops remotely and reduce time spent on each administrative task.

To ensure customer satisfaction, Northwest encourages the implementation of proven solutions, and works closely with customers through each stage of the process. Previous Northwest clients praised ScriptLogic products for their ability to simplify desktop management tasks, and to achieve and produce the documentation needed for regulatory compliance. After analyzing Pierson's environment, Northwest immediately recommended ScriptLogic's Desktop Authority and a variety of other ScriptLogic solutions, which Pierson agreed to purchase.

Once deployed, Pierson learned how to use ScriptLogic solutions solving a host of IT management, security and compliance problems:

Desktop Authority simplified routine tasks and allowed Pierson the remote management functionality he desired. When a user logs on, the configuration for that user is set according to Desktop Authority's comprehensive set of configuration elements with granular control via Desktop Authority's patented Validation Logic technology. For example, at the simplest level, a user's machine is configured to use the closest printer based on the location of the workstation. Desktop Authority also ensures that configurations on a machine eliminate security risks: an inactivity timer ensures that unattended workstations are kept secure, the range of

available applications and network resources is kept to a minimum, and old or unused mail profiles are deleted.

Desktop Authority's remote management functionality has also proven invaluable. Pierson no longer needs to visit each individual machine to deal with a troubleshooting issue.

"In one instance," recalls Pierson, "a staff member needed to send a document to a physician but was having computer problems. Using Desktop Authority, I was able to log onto the computer remotely from my home office and fix the problem in minutes."

Chris Butler, senior network engineer of Northwest Computer Support, sees a clear correlation between Pierson's desire to save time and the functionality ScriptLogic products provide.

"In a work group environment, if a user was to move to another computer, it would take a half hour to 45 minutes to reconfigure," said Butler, "Now, with Desktop Authority managing a single domain, there is no time associated with the move."

Other ScriptLogic solutions, such as Secure Copy and Enterprise Security Reporter, gave Pierson the tools necessary to monitor, manage and audit access to key network resources such as patient records and printers, and create customized, automatic reports. The ability to monitor and audit network access is essential to demonstrating regulatory compliance.

Ultimately, the partnership formed among Apple, Northwest and ScriptLogic has drastically helped Pierson alleviate many of his original concerns.

The Benefits

Since Apple's implementation of ScriptLogic solutions, Pierson has noticed a marked improvement in security and efficiency. Desktop Authority has allowed the IT staff to manage Windows desktops, access to network resources and printers, Outlook and other applications, and to provide remote network management for each of Apple's more than 20 clinics.

Furthermore, tighter security ensures patient files and other confidential data are protected from unauthorized access.

Enterprise Security Reporter allows Pierson to create automatic custom reports on security throughout the organization, and give him peace of mind that Apple is well on its way to showing compliance with HIPAA requirements.

While Pierson's responsibilities have not diminished, the time he spends working on each network management task and his overall stress levels have.

When asked to quantify how much time he has saved, he explains, "With ScriptLogic products I have multiplied my productivity – I get ten times as much work done!"

Today, whenever Pierson needs advise or help with a project, he turns to Northwest for support.

About ScriptLogic

ScriptLogic Corporation is a leader in network administration software for Microsoft Windows-based networks. ScriptLogic's award winning suite of desktop, server, and Active Directory management products help empower network administrators to proactively save time, increase security, and maintain regulatory compliance. More than 17,000 customers use

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