



Case Study

Avocent IP-based KVM at Cable & Wireless saves Christmas Day and much more!

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Ric Francis,
SSD Operations Manager,
Cable & Wireless.

• Cable & Wireless operates a Special Services Development team (SSD) which provides 24x365 managed networks support for a number of corporate customers. Remote access to business-critical servers was identified as vital to providing their customers with an even more efficient and faster service at less cost. Avocent's KVM OVER IP™ switching system provided the answer.

From its network operation centre (NOC) in central London, the SSD operates 'lean' best practices to deliver its promise of non-stop support with careful staff scheduling. Out-of-office-hours cover had been provided by staff travelling to the NOC (or an alternative C&W site in West London) to manage customer servers. However, when customer service call-outs rose to an average of about 60 events per year, a remote access solution was sought.

The Challenge

SSD Operations Manager Ric Francis tasked his team to investigate remote server management solutions. This was required to further decrease response times to be on site within the customer's contractually agreed three hours, since it was felt that this was longer than ideal. Remote server management would improve customer service by decreasing any downtime, while reducing support costs and inconvenience. Travelling time typically varied between one to two hours, so if this time could be spent solving the problem instead, then customer satisfaction would rise.

"Essentially, we wanted to be able to speed up customer service and avoid travel time to our NOC by the four people 'on call' who would need to respond to a customer's support request, while at the same time reducing the cost of support," Francis explained. "We believed that remote server management from our respective homes would provide the answer for a more rapid response."

Two possible options were put on trial in turn. The first product tested yielded unsatisfactory server state refresh times. The second product on trial was the Avocent DSR2161 16-port KVM OVER IP switch with the GUI-based DSView management tool. DSView provides a graphical display of managed servers.

The Solution

"We took delivery of a trial Avocent DSR2161 and a loaned server from Avocent Value Added Distributor, the Techland Group," Francis explained. The Cables & Wireless SSD was then able to take control of its Sun server and three PS/2 PCs running Windows applications in the central London NOC by a dial-up Internet connection from wherever the administrator skill sets were at the time.

"We liked the ability within DSView to have all server monitor windows open simultaneously and just flick through the screens to see what was happening on each server," Francis explained, "with the added benefit of very fast screen refresh rates. We also liked the system's simplicity, flexibility and scalability."

"If you can get control of your servers remotely without 'moving skill sets', it doesn't matter where your people are as long as they have access to an Internet connection," Francis explained. "The DSR2161 easily met all of our multi-layer security requirements also. The trial went very satisfactorily and Techland's co-operation, service and support was excellent. We were able to 'do more with less' and respond immediately - this was to be a bigger personal benefit than I had planned," he mused.

The Result

"I had not quite finished my dinner on Christmas day when I got a support call," Francis said. "All I had to do was logon to the faulty system from a laptop at home over the Internet to remedy the situation," Francis said. "This solution saved several hours of travelling time, several hours of customer downtime, and my young children's Christmas day!"

Having now run with the DSR2161 KVM OVER IP switch for several months, customer benefits already include proven improved response times and decreased downtime. SSD benefits are decreased travelling times, more productive support time spent on servers not in cars, improved cost competitiveness and increased customer satisfaction.

"If you can do more with less and still reduce cost and hassle while increasing customer service, I reckon you're doing pretty well," Francis enthused. "We are now far more efficient for our customers and can decrease contractual response times at no added cost, plus we have added flexibility and scalability to support more new business of managed networks."

About Cable & Wireless

With customers in 80 countries, Cable & Wireless is a leading international telecommunications company. Cable and Wireless plc., London, achieved a turnover of over 5.9 billion pounds (9.1 billion Euro) in the 2001-2002 business year. The company consists of two complementary core sectors: Cable & Wireless Regional and Cable & Wireless Global. Cable & Wireless Regional offers the complete range of telecommunications services in 35 countries world-wide. Cable & Wireless Global puts the focus for future growth on IP (Internet Protocol) and data services and solutions for business customers. In order to drive this strategy, Cable & Wireless has developed advanced IP networks and value-added services in Europe, the United States and the Asian-Pacific region. Its financial strength and powerful global IT infrastructure give Cable & Wireless a unique position in relation to international presence and business customer services. The German subsidiary has 320 employees, 220 at two locations in the Bavarian capital.

About Avocent

Avocent is the leading worldwide supplier of KVM switching and connectivity solutions that provide IT managers with access and control of multiple servers and network data centre devices. Avocent was formed in July 2000 by the merger of leading industry innovators Cybex Computer Products Corporation and Apex Inc. Avocent's KVM solutions are distributed by the world's largest server manufacturers and installed in Fortune 100 companies around the world.

Headquartered in Huntsville, Ala., Avocent has locations in Redmond, Wash.; Sunrise, Fla.; Chelmsford, Mass.; Austin, Texas; Shannon, Ireland; London; Steinhagen, Germany; Tokyo; China and Singapore. For more information about Avocent products, visit www.avocent-europe.com



'Avocent's DSView Windows application gives point-and-click access to any server and the ability to view multiple servers on a single screen.'



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