



The Power of Being There®



Case Study

Microsoft security and access needs met by Avocent KVM solutions

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Kevin Gates

Data Center Manager

Microsoft Technology Center -
Chicago

Strong emphasis on privacy and security

Microsoft is a name well known to everyone, everywhere, in the world of technology. Enterprise organizations looking to build applications using Microsoft .NET-connected technologies know that customizing Microsoft technology starts at one of the internationally-located Microsoft Technology Centers.

Located in Austin, Boston, Chicago and Silicon Valley, the Microsoft Technology Centers (MTC) are outstanding solution development environments, staffed by expert consultants. In addition to the Microsoft products and technologies, the MTCs are home to a comprehensive set of hardware and software from industry leaders. This combination of resources is instrumental in assisting enterprise organizations to find rapid solutions to their technology challenges.

The MTCs host several unique customers each week in secure, soundproof development suites. Many of these customers are working on proprietary and confidential projects, so the MTC must ensure privacy and security in its data center as well. Knowing that their customers would need access to their servers, the MTC turned to Avocent, the industry leader in KVM technology, to meet security requirements while providing console access to customers.



The DSR™ suite of products combines analog and digital technology into one KVM switch. DSR systems are scalable and flash-upgradeable.

“To ensure privacy, customers need to be able to work securely from their development suite and have access to their dedicated servers in the data center,” explained Kevin Gates, data center manager for the Microsoft Technology Center in Chicago. “The Avocent solution allows us to keep our data center accessible and secure. We are able to provide console access to our customers via the network or over IP.”

KVM is flexible fit for development suites

The Chicago MTC has 150 servers positioned across seven racks, and each development suite has its own local area network with secure access to the Internet. To support their environment, the MTC chose the Avocent DSR2161, a 16-port KVM network appliance that combines the power of digital and analog technology and provides connections for 16 servers in a 1U chassis.

One of the advantages of a KVM system is the ability to maintain a “lights-out” data center. The Avocent KVM over IP switching system provides the flexibility to assign individual user rights as well as permission by group settings. It also features multilevel passwords and authentication.

“The development suites’ networks are isolated for customer privacy. Within each network, the customer has their own domain, computers and user accounts,” added Gates. “The Avocent solution is ‘modularized’ so we can set up an Avocent switch in each network. Then, from a secured, centralized server, we can get console access to every server in our data center.”

Remote access from within the development suites wasn’t the only driver that helped the MTC choose the Avocent system. The ability to access their servers from anywhere in the world was also appealing.

Benefits of remote access

“That really speaks to how easy the Avocent system is to deploy and expand,” said Gates. “By adding another device and pointing it to the same Avocent authentication server, you can have console access to all of your servers around the world from one central location.

“Avocent’s new DSWebview software also allows us to connect to a system via a Web page,” said Gates. “That makes it even easier because now the customer doesn’t need the client software installed; they can go to a Web page and view the console there.”

Gates also appreciates the ability to troubleshoot from his desk.

“If I get a call from a customer, I don’t have to go to the data center to resolve their issue,” he said. “From my desk, I can get to the actual machine to troubleshoot. Avocent provides a centralized management solution.”

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 center 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. Visit www.avocent.com for more information about Avocent products.



Avocent’s DSWebview feature provides secure, browser-based access to virtually any data center device via Avocent’s DS Series product suite.

