

Kaseya Keeps the Gears Turning at Drive Manufacturer

Advanced Motion Controls (AMC), a leading manufacturer of servo drives for motion control, needed to get a better handle on its growing IT infrastructure. The company relies heavily on technology to design, test, manufacture and ship its products, making IT consistency key to ensuring that its servo drives flow through the product development process on schedule and that they are reliably delivered to customers. Its home-grown workstations are made up of disparate hardware components and have multiple mission-critical applications installed on them, requiring constant maintenance and updating – a process that taxed the already-spread-thin IT department. The inconsistency led to widespread performance and availability issues, affecting the productivity of end users.

In an effort to ease the management of the distributed systems, AMC deployed Symantec Altiris for remote systems management and application distribution, however, soon after installing the solution, the IT staff realized that the software presented more management issues than it solved.

“Altiris is a convoluted, irrational piece of software,” said Eric Ferry, IT Manager for Advanced Motion Controls. “It was obvious that the solution was put together from a series of acquisitions rather than built from the ground up so that all of the functions would work seamlessly with each other.” We couldn’t do what we wanted to do because we were spending so much time managing the management solution.” According to Ferry, Altiris is made up of dozens of management modules that loosely fit together under a common interface, each module performing a separate function like patch management or remote control and spawning a new window when opened.

Worse yet, the Altiris client taxed the servers and the engineering and development workstations, affecting the performance of all applications on each system. The productivity of AMC’s engineering team was in jeopardy. It got so bad that end users started taking it off their systems, and that posed a major problem for a company that is driven by technology. Consider that while AMC’s technologically savvy employees are Ferry’s biggest fans, they are also his biggest detractors. As engineers, their nature is to try to fix problems first, then report them to the IT staff. Oftentimes, the engineers think they can apply their own solutions or home-grown patches to their systems in an attempt to be more productive. However, with consistency a key component to the entire organization working together to get a product out, a rogue engineer can be quite troublesome. Altiris gave much of the administration responsibility to end users, allowing them to turn certain functions off if they saw fit. As a result, the IT staff did not have complete control of the systems in the environment, opening the network to performance, availability and security vulnerabilities.

The Altiris solution also posed a problem for AMC’s finance department, presenting them with confusing bills that surprised Ferry.

“We didn’t know what we were paying for half the time and found out that specific features we thought we were getting were not included in the services we paid for,” he said. “The product is very modular and was billed like that. A flat fee would have made things more clear. As a result, our initial investment quickly expanded to become a budgetary nightmare, costing us much more more than we had anticipated once you added up all the extra training and workshops that were needed. We were always having to shell out more money for more services. The whole thing ended up being a colossal mistake.”

Central Management, Controlled Application Delivery

Tired of complex management and time-consuming maintenance, Ferry let the Altiris licenses run out and investigated a more simple, cost-effective solution. After doing a Google search, he downloaded a trial of Kaseya’s IT systems management software and installed it on a few computers. Immediately, Ferry saw the potential of the powerful, yet intuitive, solution for remote systems management and software deployment. Better yet, the price point was right there—the cost of a migration to Kaseya would cost less than it would to renew the Altiris licenses.



Kaseya Customer Profile

Advanced Motion Controls (AMC) provides customers with technical and financial advantages in motion control by offering superior cost effective servo drive products. www.a-m-c.com

Business Challenges

Hoping to manage a growing IT infrastructure central to keeping the supply chain moving efficiently, AMC deployed Symantec Altiris for remote systems management and application distribution. However, soon after installing the solution, the IT staff realized that they had received software that didn’t meet their expectations. The solution was difficult to manage, was riddled with hidden costs and seriously affected the performance of systems. As a result, end users started taking the client off their workstations, leaving the network open to performance, availability and security vulnerabilities.

Solution

AMC scrapped Altiris and deployed an IT systems management solution from Kaseya that gave administrators complete control and access into any system on the network from a central Web-based management console. Now the IT staff is able to efficiently maintain, monitor, update, secure, back up and track any server or workstation on the network without affecting end user performance. The healthier systems ensure that employees have access to the applications they need to move products quickly through the development cycle, improving the efficiency of the supply chain and speeding time to market.

Less than three days later, the Kaseya solution was deployed on every workstation on the network, reliably monitoring and updating each system while collecting valuable IT asset information. Removing Altiris was the hardest part of the implementation, and Kaseya ended up helping to speed up that process.

"While functionality, ease-of-use and price were important, Kaseya was also a much better solution from an organizational standpoint," Ferry said. "All features are consolidated on one interface and click-throughs don't spawn dozens of popup windows. It's logically laid out, making our lives much easier."

The Kaseya client is deployed on 27 servers and 298 workstations throughout AMC's main headquarters, giving administrators complete access and visibility into all systems from a central management console. Ferry and his staff can now proactively manage each system, using automation and remote access to eliminate repetitive tasks and ensure the consistency of IT service throughout the organization. By taking administrative responsibility out of the hands of the end user, AMC is able to ensure the health of distributed systems and deliver mission-critical applications to end users in a safe, reliable and consistent manner.

Kaseya maintains a directory of applications that end users can access to install software on their workstations. Easy-to-implement permissions place limits on downloads, helping to maintain software license compliance. This process gives engineers some flexibility to install programs while preventing them from abusing the process. By controlling the software deployment process the IT staff can ensure that the software is updated regularly, is working optimally and isn't draining performance.

Ferry also uses Kaseya to manage remote backups of workstations, issue Windows patches and streamline reporting for help desk, audits and software licensing. Kaseya's scripting engine helps automate administration and the software's monitoring features help identify potential problems before they lead to downtime.

Consistent IT Service Leads to Increased Productivity

By replacing Altiris with the more powerful, more simple and more flexible Kaseya IT systems management solution, AMC is able to provide consistent IT service throughout the organization, helping to make employees more productive and speeding the product development and product delivery processes. End users have access to the tools and information they need without limiting the company's ability to protect its assets from threats to systems performance, availability and security. And better yet, end users and the IT department are on the same page, making sure everyone has the company's best interests at heart.

"Kaseya gives us control over the administrative functions of our distributed systems, allowing us to ensure they are running optimally, they are being backed up and they are secure," Ferry said. "This consistency is vital to our company where we use technology as a competitive advantage."

The Kaseya solution also saves the IT staff much needed time and resources as the IT infrastructure continues to grow in size and in importance to the company's mission. Tasks like issuing a new patch or updating a CAD application now take minutes through Kaseya's automation technology. In addition, Kaseya's proactive monitoring and alerting features help head off a potentially time-consuming 'IT crisis' before it occurs. The time saved allows administrators to focus less on administration and more on projects that help drive revenue.

"We have to run a pretty tight ship to keep product moving on our aggressive timetable, especially since most of our products are custom-designed or industry specific. Kaseya gives us the control and flexibility necessary to keep the gears running at all cylinders. The business depends on it," Ferry said.

About Kaseya

Kaseya is the leading provider of cloud-based IT management software. Kaseya solutions allow Managed Service Providers (MSPs) and IT organizations to efficiently manage IT in order to drive IT service and business success. Offered as both an industry-leading cloud solution and on-premise software, Kaseya solutions empower MSPs and mid-sized enterprises to command all of IT centrally, manage remote and distributed environments with ease, and automate across IT management functions. Kaseya solutions are in use by more than 10,000 customers worldwide in a wide variety of industries, including retail, manufacturing, healthcare, education, government, media, technology, finance, and more. Kaseya is privately held with a presence in over 20 countries. To learn more, please visit www.kaseya.com

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Eric Ferry

IT Manager, Advanced Motion Controls

Key Benefits

- Administrators have complete control over all IT systems, ensuring consistency throughout the environment from a central management console
- Mission-critical applications are delivered to end users and updated regularly, giving employees reliable access to the tools and information they need
- AMC's hand-built workstations are reliably tracked including their hardware components, peripherals and downloaded applications, giving the IT staff an accurate up-to-date snapshot of the environment
- Migration from Altiris to Kaseya resulted in immediate cost savings as well as a dramatic reduction in operational costs and man hours
- Intuitive reporting eases auditing, software licensing and help desk