

SolarWinds Displaces SCOM, Achieves 100 Percent Monitoring Coverage of Windows Servers for Carilion Clinic in Two Days

Carilion Clinic is a not-for-profit healthcare organization serving nearly one million people in Virginia through hospitals, outpatient specialty centers and advanced primary care practices. Led by multi-specialty physician teams with a shared philosophy that puts the patient first, Carilion is committed to improving outcomes for every patient while advancing the quality of care through medical education and research.

IT Management Challenge

Carilion Clinic needed to manage 100 percent of their Windows server environment to ensure health and availability of critical services.

"At minimum, we always want to know about a server being down, core service failure, or a rapidly filling disk before anyone else. In that past we used products from NetIQ, Tivoli, Microsoft SCOM, and even an in-house solution. With Systems Center Operation Manager (SCOM), our most recent choice, something that should be simple, like alerting us when a server is down or a disk is full, was buried or lost because the product wasn't communicating with all of the servers, agents were down, or notification had failed. It was too much work to manage for our small team. Managing the system was taking more time than managing the servers," said Jed Krisch, Manager, Technical Services, Carilion Clinic.

For four years, Carilion used SCOM to manage their X-86 server environment, but they were never able to gain complete coverage, even with Microsoft consulting services. The Microsoft solution was also agent-based, which is another piece of software to manage on the box. The agents failed often, and clouded data coming to the event log.

CLIENT STATISTICS

980 Servers - Mix of Windows & Linux

VMware virtual Infrastructure

11,000 endpoint devices in about 150 locations throughout Virginia.

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Solution

"We started working with SolarWinds Server & Application Monitor (SAM) after seeing just one screen in the company's existing Network Performance Monitor (NPM) deployment. My colleague pointed NPM at a Windows server and I liked everything I saw, especially the clean interface. It wasn't bloated with information – it just showed me what I needed. And that was just the beginning," said Krisch.

Carilion pulled down the free trial and in 2 days made the decision to replace SCOM. Within days, Krisch had 100 percent coverage of his server environment, and soon after installed application templates to monitor applications like Microsoft Exchange, Active Directory, Blackberry Enterprise and Citrix.

"It was easy and intuitive to build customized application monitors. This would take days to set up with SCOM. It took a few clicks to set up with SolarWinds. SolarWinds is significantly less expensive from a software perspective, but also from a hardware perspective. SCOM used 4X the hardware than SAM," said Krisch.

Results and a Look Ahead

"We were spending way too much time managing the management system," said Krisch. "Now we spend time performing deployments, upgrades, and the things we need to do and are held accountable for doing. Through these products, I truly can really sleep at night because I know 100 percent of our assets are covered, and if there is a problem, I am confident the tool will let me know about it."

One of the features SAM offers is an extensible interface. Jed has integrated SAM with Carilion's McAfee EPO, Microsoft WSUS and HP Service Desk applications to provide a single pane of glass, and save a lot of time. In the past, determining an up to date server inventory for annual license agreements was a two to three day process; it now takes only seconds.

"Through basic custom integration with our service desk, when a problem is detected, SAM can automatically generate and open an incident in our service desk application. It will also automatically close the incident when the issue is resolved within our defined SLA. We have taken advantage of the extensible nature of the SolarWinds products and have embraced the custom HTML capabilities to build interfaces that give us an even wider view of what is happening during this process. We can go to a node in SAM to see what tickets or change management items have been associated with that device, when outages are to occur, and even have alerts automatically paused during the scheduled outages," said Krisch.

Just recently, Carilion upgraded to SAM 5.0, because they needed hardware monitoring for their HP servers, which they were previously doing with HP Systems Insight Manager. Immediately after installing SAM, they were able to see hardware data and, now, truly have a single pane of glass for their server environment.

"I am looking forward to future releases, especially the ability to bring in patch management data to visualize patch compliance alongside server performance data from the same pane of glass. SAM truly has changed how we work, how we respond to problems, and how we discover problems. No management tool has been able to allow us to manage our environment this quickly or this efficiently," said Krisch.



With agentless monitoring for hundreds of applications and hardware types, Server & Application Monitor delivers the management, alerting, and reporting you need to run at peak performance.

IT Management Inspired by You.

SolarWinds (NYSE: SWI) provides powerful and affordable IT management software to more than 100,000 customers worldwide — from Fortune 500 enterprises to small businesses. We work to put our users first and remove the obstacles that have become "status quo" in traditional enterprise software. SolarWinds products are downloadable, easy to use and maintain, and provide the power, scale, and flexibility needed to address users' management priorities. Our online user community, thwack, is a gathering-place where tens of thousands of IT pros solve problems, share technology, and participate in product development for all of SolarWinds' products.

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