Borland-Groover Clinic. P.A.

ASP: Just What the Doctor Ordered

Solution Overview

Company
Borland-Groover Clinic is a $12 million gastroenterology clinic in Jacksonville, Florida. The clinic, resulting from the merger of four separate offices in the last few years, now has 20 doctors and 70 additional employees in nine locations.

Challenge
Following the mergers, Borland-Groover needed reliable connectivity for its numerous new users (and allow for future ones) and a system with a simple interface. It also had to quickly and cost-effectively deploy a new mission-critical application. The clinic only had one MIS staffer with which to accomplish these objectives.

Solution
Borland-Groover partnered with SOMA Systems, a Jacksonville, Florida-based integrator of server-based computing using the Citrix computing platform and a reseller of ASP i-NOC.com.

Benefits
The i-NOC.com ASP solution, based on Citrix WinFrame, enables the clinic to provide immediate access to mission-critical software to all of its employees and offices. The clinic can go back to its focus on treating patients - not tending to IT concerns. Future growth will be easily accomodated. And cost savings should approach 65 percent over the next five years.

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Until two years ago, nurses, insurance clerks and doctors at Jacksonville, Florida's Borland-Groover Clinic often heard a loud pounding from the back office. It wasn't a medical procedure, but rather MIS manager Christy Hill exasperatingly slamming her hands on the counter because one of the clinic's 32 external modems wasn't connecting yet again. After all, the ability to constantly access data is the lifeblood of this $12 million, nine-office gastroenterology clinic, where medical records, patient schedules, insurance and billing are all computerized. "It was clear we needed a more fail-proof way to connect, since too often, the offices were not able to do their work the way they needed to," Hill explains.

Fortunately, Borland-Groover discovered a remedy for what ailed it: a new computing solution enabled by i-NOC.com, an Application Service Provider (ASP), and Citrix WinFrame® server-based computing software, a cornerstone application serving technology for the emerging ASP market.

The solution didn't come a moment too soon for the clinic. Thanks to three mergers since 1993, the clinic had grown to 20 gastroenterologists and 70 additional employees located in nine separate offices. When the practice opened a new endoscopy unit two years ago, forcing headquarters to move, Hill, chief operating officer Victoria King, and the other administrative staffers knew they would not be taking their legacy UNIX server with them. The firm had advanced into the 21st century in the type of medicine it was practicing, and they knew it was time to get just as cutting-edge with its IT.

The Challenge: Faster Time-to-Impact on Mergers and Acquisitions
Since Hill is the only IT professional at a place where staffers think of a colon in terms of the large intestines rather than the punctuation mark used in computer code, simplicity of use was the utmost criteria. The firm knew it wanted a Microsoft Windows-based user interface. "With UNIX, it took us three weeks to get an employee up-to-speed, a real problem when we started adding doctors and staffers from all these mergers," Hill explains. Equally important, the clinic needed a new mission-critical application for medical practice management, because its 14-year-old software, M.D. Logix, was no longer being supported.

The job of planning fell to Hill, who knew that her limited IT background made her inadequate to the task. In the previous 2-1/2 years, she had gone through three consultants, every one of whom failed to account for the firm's rapid growth.

Finding Relief in the New Citrix ASP Computing Model
Fortunately, Hill discovered Jacksonville-based SOMA Systems, a Gold solutions provider of the Citrix Solutions Network. SOMA proposed a Citrix-based ASP solution running on servers located at i-NOC.com's data center. SOMA also suggested Wyse Winterm Windows-based terminals at end-user locations and a wide area network design based on Frame Relay connectivity to i-NOC.com's Network Operation Center.

Borland-Groover agreed to have the ASP host and manage its applications, which include MicroMed Practice Management, Microsoft Office Suite, Microsoft Exchange e-mail services, and web hosting.

"Borland-Groover has a lot of expertise in healthcare, but not the same level of technical expertise in the systems arena. We could meet all of their needs in a way that allows them to focus on their core

business," explains Larry Johnson, president of SOMA Systems. "Everybody needs technology, but they don't need to have it consume their business."

More Predictable, Reliable IT Operations

Borland-Groover admits that it was initially hesitant about locating its servers outside of its offices. "That's your whole business: your money, patient database, confidential materials," Hill says. "It was a big deal to let that go."

Soon, however, Hill realized her server was actually safer in the hands of i-NOC.com's engineers than at her location. She never knew, for example, that backup tapes have limits on the number of uses, so she had reused tapes over and over. "In retrospect, we were just plain fortunate not to have lost anything," she says.

To further ease Hill's concerns that backups were being performed at i-NOC.com on a regular basis, the ASP installed a special icon on Hill's computer so she could do her own backup whenever she desired. "Instead of belittling my needs, they were responsive, which ultimately helped me to feel comfortable with this arrangement," she says.

Saving Time, Saving Money

The application hosting market is a new global industry offering reliable delivery of myriad applications. For a set monthly fee, an ASP manages and delivers application capabilities to users from servers at its own data centers. Citrix application server software makes this new paradigm possible. "The ASP industry would not be successful without Citrix application server software," SOMA System's Johnson says. "Until the technology developed by Citrix came about, we never had a way to deliver these applications via a wide area network or the Internet."

For Borland-Groover, this paradigm meant that all of their applications were up and running in a matter of days, rather than the six- to 12-months it can typically take a company to roll-out new applications.

"What's more, the ASP model will lead to the clinic's saving an estimated 65 percent over five years' time," says Dennis Topo, senior vice president at i-NOC.com, largely from the reduction in personnel needs. "Most small- to medium-size companies do not want to spend the money to have an MIS department of the breadth and depth of a large organization. They can take advantage of the resources we have at our service to deploy applications quickly and economically."

Telecommunication costs have also been greatly reduced. "The Citrix technology enables us to save about $5,000 a month in telecommunications costs," Hill says, because offices require no more than a single T-1 line, while achieving exceptional performance.

Quickly Scales for Future Growth

Borland-Groover's future plans include purchasing palm pilots for each of its doctors. That way, doctors who are out of the office or on-call can have immediate access to a patient's current medical information before speaking with the patient by phone.

No additional mergers that would add multiple users are in the works, but the clinic never says never. "We didn't anticipate our last merger," Hill observes. "Fortunately, by using the ASP computing model when it did happen, we quickly scaled to accommodate the new users."

Ultimately, it is the peace of mind from knowing that well-educated, dedicated engineers are always available to the clinic - regardless of what the future brings to it - that have proven most valuable to Borland-Groover.

In the two years since Borland-Groover first outsourced its applications, Christy Hill says she hasn't felt the need to pound her fists even once. "The ASP experience has been wonderful. I know that whatever our needs, i-NOC.com will be able to meet them quickly and expertly."

Solution Detail

About the ASP Computing Model

Application service providers (ASPs) host software from centralized data centers, renting access over dedicated, high-speed networks or the Internet. ASPs enable organizations of all sizes to gain access to best-of-breed software – from the latest productivity suites to the most robust enterprise applications – without the risks, costs and complexities of maintaining it on their own.

About Citrix iBusiness

Citrix iBusiness is an Internet business unit whose pioneering leadership, industry partnerships, and advanced application server software solutions are powering the growth of the Internet and providing the infrastructure that has become the pillar of the new Application Service Provider (ASP) computing paradigm. For over a decade, Citrix has been the trusted name in application server software. Today, Citrix's application serving technology is at the heart of the ASP solution, enabling organizations of all sizes to achieve digital independence – the ability to reach more users, with more applications, in more locations at record speed.

About i-NOC.com

i-NOC.com is a web-based network operation center, providing small- and mid-sized businesses with an alternative solution to acquiring network and application technology comparable to that of Fortune 500 companies. Their network operation centers use the Citrix server-based computing model, where applications are deployed, managed, supported and executed 100% from the server. i-NOC.com offers an assortment of end-to end solutions for the hosting and management of application software and outsourced network services. For more information on i-NOC.com, visit www.i-noc.com.

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