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Intelligent Utilities for ABSOLUTE Control

Faronics Deep Freeze and State of Franklin Healthcare Associates

CASE STUDY

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History

Located in Johnson City, Tennessee, State of Franklin Healthcare Associates was founded in 1998 by physicians who shared a vision of creating an outstanding group practice to deliver high quality healthcare services to the people of the Johnson City area. State of Franklin Healthcare Associates is a multi-specialty Physician Group Practice comprised of Doctors of Internal medicine, Family Practitioners, Obstetricians, Gynecologists, and Pediatricians. Additionally, State of Franklin Healthcare Associates also offers a wide range of services at their state-of-the-art Outpatient Diagnostic Center and State Licensed Reference Laboratory.

Situation

State of Franklin Healthcare Associates has approximately 250 workstations and 19 servers. The organization employs 60 physicians and approximately 350 employees. The staff consists of nurses, patient account representatives, billing specialists, medical office personnel, administration, and management.

The workstations are used primarily to interact with the healthcare practice management system that State of Franklin Healthcare Associates uses, a web browser-based solution called System IDX. The system manages scheduling, billing, and records patient demographics, among many other things. State of Franklin Healthcare Associates also operates a browser-based Radiology lab.

The workstations are spread out amongst the organization's eight physical locations, including six clinics, one lab, and one administration office. Seven of the 19 servers are located in the administration office, in order to manage the workstations more efficiently. The IT department at State of Franklin Healthcare Associates consists of two people; William Spooner, the IT manager, and his assistant.

Problem

Because State of Franklin Healthcare Associates' applications are web browser based, workstations contaminated with spyware posed a real problem. The machines would get bogged down by pop-ups or data monitoring applications running in the background. Sometimes the problems got so bad the machines became unusable. Spyware can compromise a healthcare organization's ability to comply with HIPAA standards, because of the security risk it represents.

The IT department used several anti-spyware and adware removal solutions, but found the workstations were not getting completely cleaned. Inevitably, something would be left behind, and if even one "hook" was left, the pop-ups returned in no time. Eventually, if the spyware became bad enough, the machine was taken in for a rebuild. For each infected machine, it took approximately three hours to reformat the drive, reload the operating system, and reload any programs, user data, and whatever else was needed for a particular machine.

At times, the IT department was rebuilding five to six machines per week—taking up half of Mr. Spooner's working hours. They eventually cut the rebuild time by two-thirds by using an imaging technique, but still felt a much better solution was needed.

State of Franklin Healthcare Associates

Solution

Deep Freeze was recommended to Mr. Spooner by his assistant, who had recently worked at a local university where Deep Freeze was being used. After Mr. Spooner spoke with the manager in charge of the student computing lab facilities, he thought Deep Freeze might be the answer to the organization's growing spyware issue.

Because Deep Freeze had come so highly recommended from a trusted source, State of Franklin Healthcare Associates did not evaluate any other solutions outside of Deep Freeze. The university lab manager had asserted that his life "would be absolute misery without Deep Freeze," but with it, his life is much simpler and easier.

Mr. Spooner downloaded the trial version of Deep Freeze Enterprise and installed it on a dozen computers. In order to give users flexibility to change and personalize machines, he used the Enterprise management console to create a Thawed partition, but left the Directories and Settings Frozen.

The Deep Freeze evaluation went very well. One of the clinics called to say that one of their new PC's, in service only a day or two, was badly infected with adware. But because it was protected by Deep Freeze, the clinic staff simply rebooted the machine and the problem went away.

Evaluation

"Deep Freeze has not stopped the contaminations, but fixing infected machines is as simple as rebooting the computer," says Mr. Spooner. Instead of machines being down for up to three hours for a rebuild, the machine is now out of service for only a minute or two. This year, State of Franklin Healthcare Associates budgeted to put Deep Freeze on 150 of their workstations. Next year, the budget will allow Deep Freeze to be installed on about 95% of the organization's computers.

"Deep Freeze is our last line of defense," says Mr. Spooner. It is used in combination with an up-to-date version of an anti-spyware solution, but Deep Freeze is relied on to restore the computers every single time with a reboot. Except for hardware problems, the IT department has not touched a single computer that has Deep Freeze installed on it.